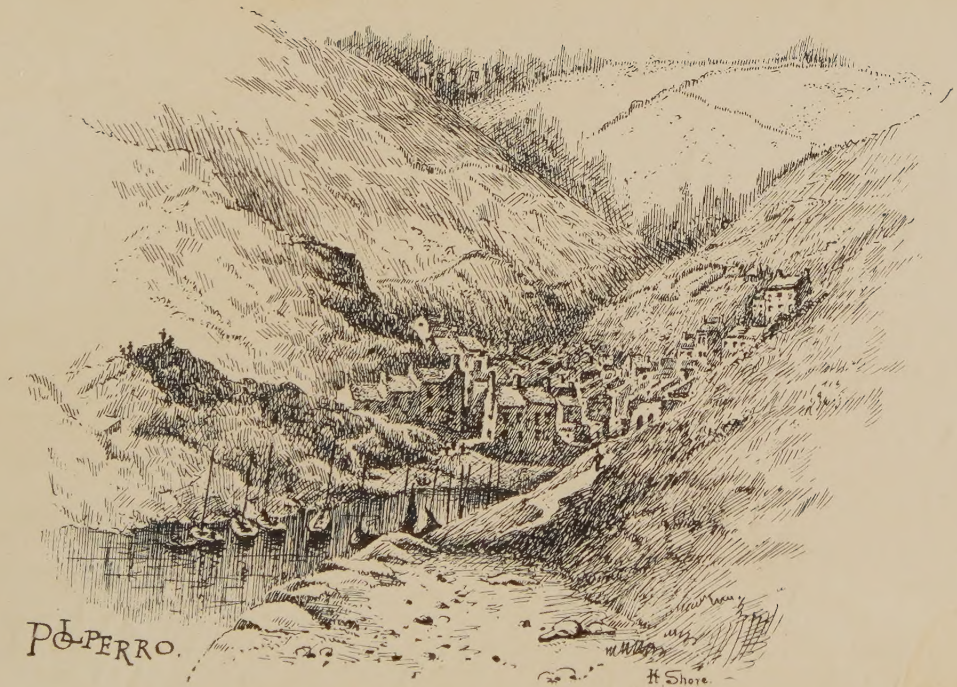
The King of the Smugglers

W. A. Stanley Hellyar


POLPERRO.
H. Shore

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The King of the Smugglers

BY

W. A. STANLEY HELLYAR

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1918

DEDICATION

TO THE YOUTH OF MY COUNTRY

AND

TO THOSE NATIVES OF MY COUNTY

WHO STILL RECALL WITH PRIDE

THE STIRRING ADVENTURES OF THEIR FORBEARS

THIS TALE IS

Dedicated

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The King of the Smugglers

CHAPTER I

FIRST BLOOD

"Hi, boy! Do you want a job?" Skipper Martin shouted at me from the deck of *The Happy Fanny.*

"Aye, aye, sir, I could do with one," I replied, crossing the quay towards the boat.

"Why, skin a cat, aren't you William Hawken's son?"

"Yes, sir," I said, "I 'm Wesley Hawken."

"S'elp me, your poor father was one of my best friends," went on the Skipper earnestly. "I was by his side when he was shot, twelve months agone, and I shall always believe that the bullet which killed him was intended for me. Go steady as you come aboard, as the deck is slippery with fish slime."

I jumped from the quay to the gunwale, and then on the deck. The Skipper looked me up and down, and seemed pleased with me.

"We want a ship's boy, and you can have the

job," he said curtly; "if you do your work well you 'll find it a good berth."

"I thought Jimmie Tabb was the boy on *The Happy Fanny*," I put in, not wishing to do Jimmie a bad turn.

"So he was," replied the Skipper, "till he was washed overboard in that gale night afore last."

"When will you want me to start, sir?"

"Now," said the Skipper, savagely biting off a fresh quid from a great roll of black tobacco. "Have you got any things?"

"Only what I 've got on," I answered.

"All right then, go home and tell your mother you are sailing with Skipper Martin, and be aboard again in twenty minutes."

Mevagissey was then what it is now, a little fishing village on the south coast of Cornwall, and in a quarter of an hour I had traversed the distance from the quay to my home and back again, and was swabbing the deck of *The Happy Fanny*.

She had just come in from a night's conger fishing, and the crew had gone to their homes to rest. If you want to see what horrible slippery stuff fish slime is go aboard a trawler

after conger fishing. As soon as a fish is landed, and before it can do any damage, its skull is smashed in by a thole-pin, and the great sea-eel will then wriggle and lash about the deck in the dark for hours, leaving trails of clinging slime.

The crew, besides myself, consisted of the Skipper, the mate (named Jack Cregan), and two ordinary seamen, and often we were at sea for two or three days at a stretch, after "top" fish, such as herring, pilchard or mackerel, which we used to catch in great quantities by a seine net, or "bottom" fish, as cod, whiting and soles, which we brought to the surface by the use of a trawl.

After I had been at my job maybe a fortnight I overheard the Skipper say to Jack Cregan in a low voice one morning when we lay up by the quay—

"What about Wes, shall we take him?"

"Yes, he 'll have to larn the trade," replied Jack.

"Well, his father did, and died with a slug through his brain-box," mused the Skipper.

"Wes may be luckier," was all Jack said in reply.

I was at a loss to account for this; I knew it

foreboded a coming storm of some sort. Then, from the amount of provisions we were laying in, I came to the conclusion that our coming trip was likely to be a longer one than I had previously undertaken.

I asked Jack about it.

"What 's in the wind, Jack ? "

"Everything," he replied. "The wind and a drop or two of salt water has swept a man and two boys off the deck to Kingdom Come since I 've been aboard. All you 've got to do is to see you don't follow them."

So I didn't get much forwarder in my quest.

We put to sea just before sundown. As we cleared the quay the sails flapped in the breeze, and were mirrored like huge brown moths in the sparkling water. The lugger, like a fluttering bird, dipped and shivered till the canvas filled ; then she glided swiftly into the milky haze of an autumn evening, heading for mid-Channel.

"Pack away the provisions, Wes," said the Skipper, "you know where they belong."

I laid hold of a sack of cabbages, and, as I turned it upside down, two pistols and four cutlasses fell out.

"Where do these go, Skipper ? "

"Go steady with 'em, lad! Take 'em down in the cabin and you will see some hooks there, and hang 'em up where they 'll be handy to reach." Then I heard him say in an undertone to the mate, "I forgot all about them."

The cabin was a kind of a general kitchen, living room, and bedroom, and when we all found ourselves there at the same time we about filled it right up.

As I hung up the cutlasses I noticed the hilts were of thick horn, and roughened so as to give a better grip, the hand being protected by a circular shield of metal. The blades were broad and curved; they measured some eighteen inches long, and were very sharp. I had no doubt of being able to put one of these to good account if need be.

Never had I fired a pistol, and, as there were only two, I suspected that I shouldn't get the chance of trying my 'prentice hand this time.

At once I connected these weapons of defence with tubs of brandy, which my father would occasionally bring home in various secret and roundabout ways.

I recalled his oft-repeated caution—

"Wes, my son, if anyone ever asks you about

them tubs, mind you know nothing ;" or again he would say—

" Wes, mebbe some curious lubbers might be asking you about such things as tea or baccy or silks—well, you tell 'em to mind their own business."

Experience had therefore taught me to link with these things many hidden dangers and much violence, but why it should be so I didn't know. Most of the seafaring inhabitants in our district I knew were always supplied with their tubs, but wherein lay the harm I was at a loss at that time to understand. Alas! for my boyish ignorance, which was later on to have such an awakening. Nevertheless, I felt quite safe with Skipper Martin ; he was a man who commanded great respect, and seemed to be on friendly terms with all the squires, parsons and yeomen in the district.

On the voyage one or two little scraps of conversation were let drop which set me thinking.

" It don't hurt no one to keep in with a harbour-master," said the Skipper generally.

" I never heard anyone say a good word for Solomon Kestle, though," replied one of the men.

"I wouldn't trust him farther than I could fling a bull by the tail," chimed in Jack.

"He 's got his ugly nose too much in everybody's business for my liking," said another.

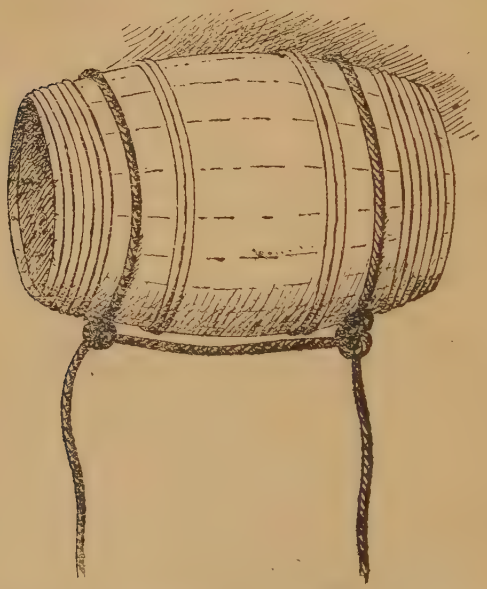
"Well, I 've always found him straightforward, and I shall never believe he 's in Government service, new-comer that he is;" and this deliberate judgment of the Skipper discouraged further comment for the time.

We made Cherbourg, after a fair wind, at nine o'clock the following evening, and loaded up next day with forty tubs. There were boats there from nearly all the south coast ports for tubs, and the Frenchmen were busy night and day putting them aboard and entertaining the skippers. Each tub or keg contained four gallons of the best French white brandy, and weighed about fifty pounds. They were very strongly made to withstand rough usage, and for easier handling were furnished with rope slings.

We got away again about noon, hoping to do the return journey in forty-eight hours.

The Skipper parcelled out the cargo for his various customers by chalking different marks on the tubs, and I learnt for the first time that

his patrons included some of the biggest gentry in the district; indeed, they had already paid their money in advance for their goods; and



further, it appeared that the profit on the cargo was as much as twenty-four shillings a tub.

"Look here, Wes," said the Skipper to me, "you don't want to talk about our business to anybody. This is a fishing-boat, and when we don't bring in no fish we 've had no luck."

"Aye, aye, sir," I said, with a knowing wink that showed him I understood what he meant.

"We are landing this lot on Porthpean Beach at ten o'clock to-night, and we shall hang about outside from dusk."

"Right, sir."

"There must be no lights aboard after sundown," he went on, "and if there 's any cooking to be done you must keep the cabin hatch shut, so that the burning sticks won't light up the rigging."

"You can leave it to me, sir."

Then he gave me a startler.

"The Government are dead against this line of business, and if we are caught, it 's Botany Bay for me, and you will be 'pressed into the Navy."

"I 'll go where you go, Skipper," I said, and he patted me on the back.

"If we get the goods away all right there 's four shillings a tub to be divided amongst the crew according to their wages, so nobody wants you to work for nothing," and the Skipper helped himself to a curly quid from a fresh roll of Cherbourg twist.

We had a bit of time to spare, and waited

about to the windward two miles out or so till nearly ten o'clock, when we cautiously approached the shore.

"Does Kestle know the time of landing?" asked Jack.

"Yes," replied the Skipper, "he says he 'll give us a hand."

One of the reasons why this beach was selected was that Jack lived there, and the light from his cottage window was to be our guide; indeed, without some such beacon it would have been dangerous at night to attempt to run ashore. In addition, it was a lonely spot, and there was good water at high tide. The cliff-side was covered in scrub, which was handy for hiding the cargo, and, until fetched, it was under Jack's vigilant care. It would never do to run into the quay-side in Mevagissey village, where, of course, all our movements might be seen.

"Jack," I overheard the Skipper say in a tone of alarm, "what 's them two lights on the port bow? Is that your old woman's, or be us off our beat?"

By the light of the stars I saw Jack violently scratching his head. Then in a thick voice he exclaimed—

"Aye, aye, that 's hern, and what 's more, there 's summat wrong. She told me the other day that if ever I saw a light upstairs and down I was to look out for trouble."

"There 's only one thing to do then, we must sink 'em. Give a hand here, men, quick. Two of you get the tubs up, they must go overboard."

As they came up on deck a line was hastily run through the rope loops or slings, to which weights were fastened, and the cargo in this way was rolled over the side, where it sank with a soft splash to the bottom, about half a mile from land, the Skipper and Jack taking the bearings as well as they could in the bad light.

"Down with the fores'l and jib," rang out the former's voice, "and keep her straight in her course. I reckon them double lights wants clearing up—the sooner the better."

When the keel grated on the shingle two lanterns flashed simultaneously in our faces, and a sharp voice cried—

"Hands up, Martin! We are Customs officers, and are going to board you."

Two Preventive men in uniform, each armed with a heavy horse pistol, then clambered on

board the smack, followed by a third man, who to our amazement was no other than Solomon Kestle. So it was he, then, who was the traitor in the piece.

Always self-controlled and resourceful, the Skipper betrayed no resentment at the action of the officers or the deceit of Kestle.

"There 's no smuggled goods on my boat," he said quite calmly, "and if you don't believe me, search her."

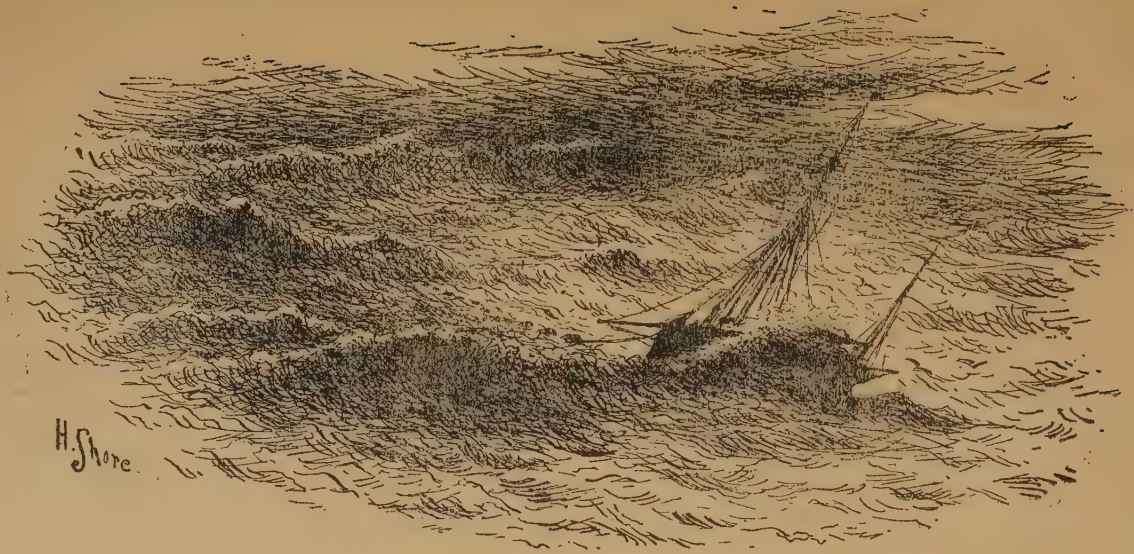
There was a burst of derisive laughter.

"Put on the bracelets," said the chief of the party to his comrade, drawing his pistol. "The first man who resists will get a bullet through his hide."

I saw from the glint of the steel that our crew now each had a cutlass, and it looked for the moment as if there was going to be a hot fight. However, the Skipper checked the too evident anger of the men.

"Let them do as they like, boys," he said light-heartedly, "they 'll tire of the job before we shall."

We were all handcuffed but the Skipper, and then the search commenced. Of course, nothing was found, and after an exchange of a few



A smuggling boat riding by her tubs in a gale.

rasping oaths the handcuffs were removed, and the Preventive men, with Kestle, exasperated and chagrined, clambered ashore.

"One of them pinched a bit of skin off my wrist putting on these iron things," I remarked, as I noticed the blood trickling down my hand.

"Did he, which of 'em?"

"The younger man with the ginger whiskers."

"He did, did he, the hell-hound!" cried the Skipper, swearing lustily. "And now what will you say when I tell you that was the very chap who killed your father . . . ?"

They knew from Kestle's information that the boat ought to be loaded with tubs, and concluded that the Skipper, in some miraculous way, had been warned, and had followed the usual plan in such predicaments of sinking them.

"They will drag the bay for them at daylight," Jack said in a low tone to his chief, "and the blackguards will probably get the prize-money. But they can never bring it home to us, so we 're all right. Let 's see what the old woman has to say."

Leaving the Skipper and the third man on the smack, Jack and I struck out across the beach

for the cottage, and as we reached the hard road we were just in time to see the Preventive men slink away in one direction and Solomon Kestle, the harbour-master, strike out for his home at Charlestown. The path he had to follow was scarcely more than a goat track across the sheer cliffs, and only a man who knew every inch of the place would have risked his neck along it after dark.

On reaching home Jack was surprised to find the house empty, although the two lights were still burning. His wife and daughter came in soon after.

"I saw your lights, old woman."

"I knew you did," she replied, "for I went down on the beach and heard all from behind a sand heap."

Jack looked questioningly at a blood-stained and weighty bludgeon which he now noticed protruding from the folds of her skirt.

"Hullo, what have you been doing with this?" and he pointed to the weapon.

"Why, breaking coal of course, blockhead!" and after a pause she added, with venomous emphasis, "What did I always tell you about that varmint, Solomon Kestle?"

"We shall be even with that spy yet," I heard Jack say.

The woman gave a grunt of satisfaction, and set about preparing supper.

Leaving Jack at home, I rejoined the boat, which was just afloat, and waiting for her to drift out beyond low-water mark, we dropped anchor in the shelter of the bay for the remainder of the night.

"Here they come," said the Skipper, as dawn was breaking, "they were wise enough to know that we couldn't 'creep' for the cargo at night with a trawler."

I could just discern a rowing-boat coming up around the point.

"Kestle isn't with them to-day," said another, as only two figures were visible.

We stood off, appearing to take no interest in the proceedings.

We watched them get out their line with a row of hooks at the end, specially made for the purpose, and start "creeping" for the tubs.

"How will they get 'em all in that boat?" I asked innocently of one of the crew.

"They won't get 'em in, me boy. They 'll

just cut off the sinkers as they pull 'em up, and the cargo will then float."

'Hullo, they have got something now," cried the Skipper, as the line tightened and they stopped rowing.

"It 's only a lump of seaweed," said someone, and we chuckled pleasantly.

Half an hour went by and it tightened again, but this time they fished up nothing more valuable than a strayed crab-pot.

They worked to and fro patiently and methodically for another hour, and we drifted towards them a bit.

"She 's holding now," I sang out, and we noticed the way on the boat stop suddenly, and the line rise to the surface.

We could see from the men's movements that they were getting excited, and they both hauled away with vigour.

The hooks were holding this time.

"What is it?" asked the Skipper.

"Blest if I know," someone replied, "'tisn't the tubs, I 'll wager a plug of the best."

A huge black shape broke the water, and they pulled it over the gunwale.

It was a human body, and when it was

turned over we could almost hear the men's exclamations of horror as the stark face of their comrade, Solomon Kestle, stared up at them.

After the officers had taken the corpse ashore, and proceeded inland to convey the news of their discovery to the authorities, you can lay any amount of odds they returned too late to find the goods.

CHAPTER II

AN UNUSED CAVE

As might be expected, after the shock which followed the tragic death of Kestle, it was thought safer to carry on in a slow and normal manner for the next few weeks the ostensible business of fishing (used as a cloak to our real business of smuggling), and we spent our time either in this way at sea or mending the nets ashore.

A month went by, when the Skipper received a visit from a gentleman, who came on horseback from some distance, judging by the exhausted and hard-ridden appearance of his steed. He stepped aboard and came down in the cabin, where I was having a rest in my bunk. I let on to be asleep, and this is what I overheard—

"We can do with from sixty to eighty tubs and a hundredweight of tobacco, Martin."

"Yes, yes, but the north coast is very different from the south, and I can't run ashore

at many places there at night, especially this time of year."

"You can make a daylight landing without any risk," replied the visitor. "We don't see a Government man about there once in a ringed moon."

"Some of your beaches, you know, would knock in the bottom of a man-of-war in about two shakes of a lobster's flapper. I don't want to lose my boat;" and the Skipper spoke in quite a tone of alarm.

"If you take the second cove north of Trevose Head you 've got a little beach as safe and sheltered as a mill-pond."

"You wouldn't care to come across here south for the stuff, I suppose?"

"No, Martin," answered the stranger; "it 's too far, and from all I hear you are overrun this way with Preventive men."

"Well, I shall want forty-two shillings and sixpence a tub and twenty-five shillings a tub down, venture money. We 'll throw the baccy in."

"Agreed," cried the visitor. "When shall I bring over the cash?"

"Any time. I shan't go out now till I sail for you."

"How long will the journey take?"

"From five days to a week."

"Can we fix up any time?"

"You bring your money over," replied the Skipper, "say, on Wednesday, and you send out your look-outs at daylight Tuesday morning following."

"That shall be done."

"You 'll have the balance of the money ready on delivery?"

"Yes," replied the stranger, "and as the customers will be there themselves, there will be plenty of hands to clear you on arrival."

This time we went to Roscoff (or Rosco' as it was called), being a trifle nearer for Land's End than Cherbourg, and got aboard a cargo of seventy tubs and a hundredweight of cake tobacco, the excise duty on which I ascertained at a later date would have amounted to nearly five hundred pounds. All went well until we approached our landing-place. We had been signalled by a look-out or two from the shore and everything seemed clear. We had turned the Head and were about running in.

I said—

"Skipper, what 's that red rag fluttering there on the point ? "

"Aye, aye, that 's a danger flag, we must stand off. Port yer helm, Jack," he commanded.

"This is a nice mess these lubbers have led us into," exclaimed the latter. "Blest if I don't see another red handkercher under the beach."

So we luffed and tacked for nearly an hour, until I thought that the Skipper would have gone raving mad.

"Oh ! what a pretty place to be caught in a nor'-wester," he raved, as his eyes took in the treacherous-looking rocks bounding the coast. "If we haven't earned our money this trip I 'll swallow the mizzen-mast. Strike me, much more waiting and I 'll clear off with 'em, and find a market somewhere else. . . ."

"Here 's a bit of white at last. Now we 're all right," chimed in Jack, much to our relief. Then we put her about and ran in.

There were plenty of willing hands to help and guide us. They popped out like magic as we touched the beach. Farm carts and horses sprang up from nowhere, and the spot which a

few minutes ago looked deserted was now humming with activity. The Skipper's wrath, however, had not yet cooled down.

"Why keep me out there all this time?" he asked.

"We had a Preventive man nosing about, Cap'n Martin," said the spokesman of the party.

"I thought there were none about here!"

"Well, this is a new man, just come to the district, and naturally we had to put him out of harm's way."

"Did you drown the lout or shoot him?" inquired the Skipper.

"Neither. Old Sam Bateman here took charge of the ceremonies, and he 'll tell you how he disposed of him."

Taking a clay pipe from his mouth, and tucking it away in his waistcoat pocket, old Sam came forward. He was a dry-looking old stick, with a great belt of wool completely encircling his face.

"Sam 's dying for a drink, Cap'n," said somebody in the crowd, "and he can't talk when he 's dry."

This was an unmistakable hint that the

customers wanted a taste of the good things which we were bringing in, and the Skipper, nothing loth, tapped a tub and passed it ashore in response to the suggestion. The cogs in Sam's conversational wheel having now been oiled, he proceeded to clear up the mystery.

"When I 'eard as how he was 'ere I had to make me plans. This isn't the first Preventive man I 've taken a rise out of, and won't be the last. After I 'd passed the time of day with 'un, he asked me what you was doing out there. I said you looked to me as if you 'd lost some of yer crab-pots."

"'She 's got a lot of sail up to be looking for pots,' says he.

"'Mebbe she 's got 'em up to dry 'em,' says I, 'or mebbe she 's too lazy to take 'em down.'

"Then I says: 'How do you like your job down here?'

"'It 's rough country,' he says, 'compared with what I 've been accustomed to up in Dosset. But I dare say I 'll get used to it.'

"'If you keep yer eyes open you 'll be all right,' I says, and I give 'un the wink."

Sam illustrated "the wink," and it looked as if he shut up the whole of one side of his face.

" ' Have you seen that cave up there in the cliff ? Because you ought to keep your eye on that,' says I, and I tipped 'un another wink.

" ' Where is it ? ' he says in a minute. ' I don't think I 've seen it.'

" I durn't let him wander about on his own account, for if he 'd seen half of the carts and men in hiding he 'd have smelt a rat.

" ' It wants a bit o' finding,' I says. ' You 'd better go back the way you came, and just before you get to the top of the cliff take the track to the left and then to the left again, out seawards every time. When you reach the end you 'll see a path below you, climb down on to this, and a little farther on you 'll see the entrance hole at your feet.'

" He took the bait like a hungry mackerel, and I had to shout after him : ' 'Tisn't bigger than a fox's hole, but inside 'tis as big as a barn.' "

" Don't you use that hole now then, Sam ? "

" No, Skipper. That hole hasn't been used in my time, and for good reason, too. Why, the track up to it from the beach is worn as plain as a footpath. Them as made it 'ad

plenty of time on their 'ands. It 's cut out o' solid slate a 'undered foot up."

While we were waiting half a mile out, at least a dozen pair of eyes watched the retreating figure of the Exciseman, all glad to see his back. They saw him gingerly pick out his way and take his bearings, their only concern being lest he should tire of his search. Finally they saw him disappear around the ledges of rock, and knew that he was proceeding according to Sam's instructions. Being a big man, he had some difficulty in squeezing himself through the opening, but when he got inside he no doubt felt well rewarded for his pains. As Sam had said, the cave was like a huge barn for size, and the officer had to wait some minutes to accustom his eyes to the dim light. It was reported later that he was pleased at the thought of making a profitable discovery at the outset of his career, and began to congratulate himself, despite the vault-like dampness of his weird surroundings.

However, he was soon to be disillusioned. The cave was not so promising after all. It was obvious that it had not been used for some considerable time. With exclamations of wrath and annoyance he took up some mildewed

pieces of rope and a bit of hoop-iron to examine outside, and turned back towards the light.

The entrance was blocked!

As soon as the Preventive man on his mission of investigation had disappeared through the little opening into the cave, two burly labourers lying in wait (and who had heard his remarks on discovering how he had been duped) appeared from around a shoulder of rock on the other side, half dragging and half carrying with them a cross-barred wooden gate, which they had borrowed from an adjoining field. In a second they had placed this up on the ledge to cover the hole, and laid their bodily weight against it, one at each end.

The energetic officer was now like a rat in a cage, and apart from the fact that it was hopeless for him to try and get out, he was unable to see either his jailers or what was going on outside.

Meanwhile the "run" proceeded merrily apace. Whatever the prisoner thought or suspected in his tomb-like solitude, two things at least were certain, he knew nothing and could do nothing.

I heard afterwards that he started with

threats as he felt the force of the indignity practised upon him, and finding them unavailing, resorted to entreaties, but all to no purpose. At last, worn out and suspecting the reason why he was being kept a prisoner, he philosophically made himself as comfortable as was possible in such a place.

The sun went down, the dusk arrived, and he was still imprisoned. When dusk gave way to darkness the gate yielded to his pressure. This he straightway kicked over the cliff. Having wriggled himself out, he found that his captors had disappeared, but how to gain the summit of the cliff was not an easy matter. He soon realised the foolhardiness of attempting to do this in the darkness, when one false step would send him down the precipice to certain destruction. So he took the only course open to him, crept back again into the hole and waited for daylight.

CHAPTER III

A BREEZE AND THE OUTCOME

For the next two years I took part in some half a dozen "runs" with *The Happy Fanny*, thus adding to my wages and ensuring a better living to my mother. An extra twenty pounds a year was not to be despised in those days, when labourers were bringing up large families on ten shillings a week, with a cottage and a pig as make-weights.

Although, when we found ourselves in a tight corner (which was not often), the fearlessness and resource of Skipper Martin always carried us through, yet the rough life of a fisherman and smuggler began to tell on him at last, and an acute attack of rheumatism made him a cripple, and laid up *The Happy Fanny* to her moorings,

With the spirit of adventure strong on me, I visited Polperro, a port farther along the coast. I noticed that we could never cross to the other side without seeing two or three Polperro boats

there. These boats were bigger than *The Happy Fanny*, fore-and-aft rigged, and very fast.

"Good mornin', Cap'n," I said, as I presented myself to Captain Simon Davey, who was propping himself up against the capstan on the quay, with a few seafaring cronies around him. "Do you want a mate?"

The Captain was about fifty, stood five foot ten in height, but looked less, for he was as broad as a door. His complexion was the colour of the sun when it sets in a fog for fine weather; the skin on his hands shone, and was as scaly as a lizard's hide. His face was bare of hair, and looked as if it had never grown any.

He cast his eye over me, then spat without shifting his pipe.

"Who have yer been with?" he asked.

"Skipper Martin, on *The Happy Fanny*."

"Why, bust it!" he replied, "I thought I had seen you afore. How 's Martin?"

"He 's bad," I said. "I don't reckon he 'll sail again."

"Have your party been killing any more Preventive men lately?"

"No, our luck 's been out of late."

"What may your name be?"

"Wesley Hawken, Cap'n."

"Son of William Hawken, the sail-maker?"

I nodded.

"Great snakes! Considerin' what they done to your father, you are entitled to a few scalps. Nobody this side the Tamar will begrudge 'em." Then he continued: "Have you run against any of these Revenue cutters the Government have got out?"

"Not yet," I replied.

"Then you 've been lucky, for *The Happy Fanny* would never get away from 'em." After a pause he said: "I 'm looking for a bo'sun for *The Goldfinch*. When can yer sign on?"

"Now, sir."

So it was fixed up, and proud I felt to take my turn at the helm of *The Goldfinch*, for she had the reputation of being the fastest craft afloat between Land's End and Plymouth.

The Government about this time were patrolling the Channel with Revenue cutters from Devonport, as well as using Preventive men on shore. These services ashore and afloat,

however, were not working well together, there being constant disputes between them as to the division of the prize-money on captures brought about by their joint enterprise, which reward amounted to half the duty, or sixteen shillings a tub, and five shillings a pound on tea and tobacco. Of this rivalry I was able to take great advantage, as I shall presently tell.

"Bo'sun," said the Captain, calling me into the cabin just before sailing, "fishing is no good to me," and he looked straight at me to see how I should take it.

"It 's dirty work at best, Cap'n," I replied.

"I leave that for the younger men. I only do a little trading now, and I dare say you 've noticed that *The Goldfinch* is built specially for it."

I said I had.

"I met Martin," he went on, "the last time he crossed, and he told me that he placed more reliance on you than any other of the crew, and that 's why I took you on. Do'ee see?"

"Aye, aye, Cap'n."

"Now I don't run ashore, and never shall

again. Martin could. He had everything in his favour. Here it 's too dangerous. I sink 'em."

I said—

"I suppose you give the usual tub-money, Cap'n ?"

"Yes, five shillings," he said, squeezing himself into a bunk, which only held half of him, for a snooze. "We sail to-morrow."

St. Brelade's Bay, Jersey, was our destination for the usual cargo, all slung for sinking. We timed ourselves at starting for the return journey to reach home just after dark, when we could drop our contraband unseen and in the most suitable spot. Arriving in this way would arouse no suspicions, and should there be Customs officers about, it would appear as if we were just coming in after a day's fishing. Before we had been long on the way, however, a stiff breeze sprang up right aft, and we were making a matter of eight to ten knots in no time.

"Cap'n," I said, "we shall make port at this rate hours before dark."

"Strike me ! You must shorten sail," he replied gruffly.

The more sail we took in the more it blew.

"Well, dang it! We 'd better take advantage of the wind," said the Captain a little later. "It 's likely to drop any minute; if not, we can lay off shore on the tide until dark."

We got off Downend Point about four in the afternoon and dropped anchor. Hardly had we done so when I noticed that the Captain was straining his eyes seaward.

"What do you make of this craft coming up behind us?" he asked me anxiously.

"I don't like the look of her," I said. "I spied her awhile ago going down Channel."

"Stick a fat pig! What has she got all that sail up for?" pursued the Captain.

Something then happened on board the stranger which stopped further conversation, and the Captain, mate and I looked into each other's eyes blankly for just a second.

A longshoreman would have noticed nothing, as the boat was at least four miles away, and in addition the hard wind that was blowing filled the eyes with moisture as soon as you tried to face it. To the long-sighted seafaring man, however, it was different. We noticed something which appeared to be fluttering at the

bowsprit. It had just been placed there. I knew the class of boat which carried a staff at the end of the bowsprit clear of the jib, and it didn't take me long to realise that they had just flown a little Jack from this pole. This told us that she was a Revenue cutter, and what was more, she was making straight for us.

"S'help me, she must put us down for a lot of dismasted dunderheads." The Captain had one foot on the poop, and broke the silence in a regretful tone. "We ought to be nursery-maids, not smugglers. She saw we hadn't got sail enough to take the full benefit of the wind, and too much if we were only changing our fishing ground."

"Yes," I chimed in, "they could see that the breeze was bringing us home before our time."

She was now no doubt critically watching how we should take the signal.

"She 's going to board us," said the mate casually, and selecting a clear piece of water, he spat into it.

"Hey ho! Will she?" roared the Captain. "She 'll have to catch us first, and she won't find nothing on us then," saying which, he broke into a scrappy song.

There was not a moment to lose. We had to act, and Simon Davey, who was the most daring smuggler on the coast, knew all the moves in the game.

"Hoist sail, me lads, and give her her head!" his voice rang out as he lent a hand at weighing the anchor. "We 'll take her round the point and drop 'em."

We all cursed ourselves soundly for our rashness in not waiting till dark.

The Captain took the rudder, and so soon as the point shielded us from the cutter's view, it was only the work of a minute to cut away the tubs with the sinkers attached.

We were now in full sight of Polperro, and the question was, had anyone seen us? We then pointed her due west, crossed the bay, and crowded on full sail.

The Captain and I spent all the time we could spare in furtively looking ashore or watching the cutter.

"Stab me! She 's following us!" he chortled, with a grin. "We 'll give her a run. Ease the jib-sheet there!"

She had a little bit the better of the breeze, but we knew we could stall her off till darkness covered our tracks.

She crossed the bay about five minutes after us, and I think we all settled down to a good long race.

"She 's a new boat, but she 'll have to be a mighty sight faster than the old 'un to overtake us," chuckled the Captain, stuffing as much snuff up his nostrils as would fill a teaspoon.

"The likes of her isn't going to take down the colours of *The Goldfinch*," responded the mate, who could gauge up the cutter's chance at a glance.

"They couldn't have thought we dropped 'em," pursued the Captain.

"We were too quick for 'em," I replied.

"Hullo, me hearties! They 've given it up," he shouted, as to our surprise we noticed that she had suddenly swung round and abandoned the chase.

"I don't like the look of that," I said.

"Nor don't I," echoed the Captain. "They 've had a signal from shore, and we shall lose our cargo if we don't our skins."

He took the boat in a point or two nearer the cliffs, and as soon as the cutter was out of view, he said to me—

"Take off your shoes, bo'sun, and swim

ashore and see what they are doing. We 'll put into Looe and walk home."

I jumped overboard, and after half a mile swim reached the cliff-side, and it wasn't long before I got a full sight of the proceedings. The cutter had anchored just about where we had got rid of our cargo, and in addition there was a boat putting out from the port to join them. When I saw them getting the creeping tackle ready, I knew at once that our action had been under the observation of the shoremen, and that they had in some way or other signalled to the cutter.

I said to myself—

"Hullo! Who 's going to get the prize-money here, I wonder?"

I lay down on top of the cliff, and after waiting half an hour, saw them find the crop and commence to tow it in.

The Revenue men by this time had put in, and got another boat out to assist in the salving operations.

As soon as they beached the cargo, I could see that they were discussing a very knotty point as to whom it belonged.

The dry, stiff early autumn breeze had dried

my clothes, and so I came down into the village to get a better view.

"We 'll take charge of this lot, you can leave 'em alone," I heard the Captain in command of the cutter say, in a peremptory tone.

"You wouldn't have got 'em if it hadn't been for us," said the chief of the shoremen.

"Hear his silly talk!" chimed in another of the seamen, throwing as much sarcasm as he could into his words.

"Whose silly talk?" demanded the other. "We don't want any sauce from yobs learning the game," and he rounded off the sentence with a string of oaths.

"I 'll knock your head off if you call me a yob! Get back to the plough-tail, you ugly lubber!" hissed the seaman, rushing at his man.

The band then began to play. The Captain and three of the cutter's crew of six had to tackle the three Preventive men, and as the weight appeared to be with the latter, it promised to be an even battle. The Captain, however, didn't seem to relish the idea of joining in.

"It 's no use to fight, men," he shouted. "We 're all for the King; let 's drink his

health." So saying, he proceeded to knock off a hoop.

That put a stop to further fighting, and the six men gathered round the last speaker and the still dripping tubs.

They bored a spile hole in the bung of one, and soon patched up their quarrel with neat brandy.

Having toasted the King, they pledged one another's health in all sorts of improvised loving-cups, and it wasn't very long before they were singing and in merry mood, greatly to the amusement, as you can well understand, of the inhabitants of the little village, who were keenly watching the fun.

"Where 's Cap'n Davey?" "Is this Simon Davey's lot?" were some of the questions which were put to me, but I was not out to give anything away.

"Hullo, Wes!" said a familiar voice in my ear, "are you in this?" and who should clap me on the shoulder but Jack Cregan.

"Why, Jack, what are you doing here?" I asked him.

"I put in to have a look at a boat for sale, and I couldn't tear myself away till the sport was over."

I said in a low voice—

"Jack, I want those tubs; will you help me get them?"

"It 's dangerous work, sonny," he replied, "and two of them know us."

"We 'll risk that."

"They 've all got pistols, and that chap with the carroty whiskers will fire in a crack," he went on.

"Never mind him," I said; "I want your help."

"Then you shall have it, Wes."

He spoke quietly, but I knew from past experience I could count upon the best he could give.

Dusk was now setting in, and the Government men were still busily carousing. So much so, that they did not even notice the making tide, which was lapping the sand a few feet away from them. The breeze had dropped, and under the shelter of Downend Point the sea was scarcely more than a ripple.

"Jack," I said, "we must get away the oars from all the boats lying about."

"Old Tom Crago here will help us to do that," he replied.

Tom was a little old wizened-up man, scarcely five feet high, with a hawk-like face and monkeyish limbs, and on hearing his name mentioned he came sidling up to us.

"We want you to strip all these boats of their oars, Tom, and hide 'em away," I said.

Tom looked serious for a minute, and then put on a grin that had about the deepest meaning I had ever seen.

"Is this for Cap'n Davey?" he asked.

"Yes," we said.

"I'll do anything for he," and, so saying, Tom started on his job.

The Customs boat, which was beached almost by the side of the men, and was of course the most important, wanted some tackling, but crawling up to it with the greatest caution and waiting my time, I succeeded in getting away the pair of sculls and two oars which it contained without being seen.

We then started on our adventure, the general plan of which Jack had long since guessed.

"Tom says," reported the latter, "that he has just the boat for us at the end of the beach, and we ought to make tracks."

"Is your knife pretty sharp?" I asked.

" My knife 'll do what we want," replied Jack, and we stole away separately from the still curious and interested villagers.

We got into Tom's boat and pulled out perhaps half a mile, and then slowly and quietly came back so as to land just opposite the jovial party, and, of course, the tubs.

It was high water, and as we stole in we could just discern some dusky figures of the soberest of the party on their legs making an effort to bestir and awake the others to a sense of their duty.

" Come on, men," we heard one hiccup in drunken accents, " it 's nearly dark ; let 's git these tubs in Scustom House."

" Orlri', don't be in such (hic) a hurry, I shay, don't be in su- (hic) a hurry ! " urged one of the less active and still thirsty members.

" 'Ear, 'ear ! " came from two or three of the other dry throats, and with that the farthest away staggered or shuffled again towards the flowing keg.

We had now to watch for our opportunity. It was getting darker every minute, but also the very darkness might arouse the men to a final combined effort to get the contraband away in safety. The string of tubs lay in clumps

scattered about between them and the sea, with the bottom-most very nearly afloat. With Jack at the sculls, acting under my directions, we brought the bow of the boat alongside these nearest tubs, and it wasn't long before, by pulling and tugging, we had shipped aboard some half a dozen without any suspicions being roused.

We had now to operate from the beach, as the tide could serve us no further, and this we felt was where we should encounter some trouble.

Stepping out of the boat, I crept up to the remainder of the cargo, and after severing with my knife the tub slings from the line, managed by dint of great exertion and care to roll down to the sea one by one another six or seven. These would have filled the little boat which we had borrowed, so while I was so engaged collecting them Jack had made them fast to another line, and they floated around the boat.

"Come on, you (hic) chaps." It was the husky voice of the cutter's chief. "You 've all had enough. Let 's get to (hic) w-w-work," and we heard his feet shuffling about on the sand as he tried to balance himself.

Then two or three others attempted to rise,

and barging into one another in their efforts to steady themselves, they all fell over again like a lot of ninepins. They regarded this more or less as a joke, and while their hilarity lasted I went ahead with my work.

In a whisper just aloud enough to pierce the wash of the sea I said—

"Jack, there are only two left, and as far as I can make out they are using these for supports for their backs."

"We better let them have 'em," replied Jack, who was anxious to get away with the booty, and who would have gone long since if he had not been under my orders.

"I don't like leaving them anything, they don't deserve it."

I had no sooner spoken than a voice struck us from the water under our noses.

"Hell is beaten, Wes! How many 's left?"

The voice belonged to Captain Simon, whose head only was visible out of the sea.

I told him.

"Dang it! we must have them, fair play or foul," he said in anxious tones.

"Must we, Cap'n?"

"If we leave any evidence in their hands, as

they know *The Goldfinch* brought them over, we shall all go to chokey."

"What about the one they 've tapped?" I asked.

"Why, rattle me up! they 'll not have the face to produce that one—if there is anything left," he added with a chuckle.

"I could do with a bit more help, then," I said.

"Right," he went on, "you and me will take one each. There 's just room in the boat for them and for me as well."

The group were now making a serious effort to bestir themselves, and it was evident that some were scanning about for the tubs. The Captain and I then approached them. We kept our faces well down so that we should run the least possible chance of being identified.

"Matey, let 's give yer a hand; you seem tired!" said the Captain in a disguised voice to one of the men who was trying his best to rise.

Someone shouted out—

"No, sh'tand away (hic) there!"

We then dashed in, and before they realised what had happened we had charged up against

one or two, knocked them over, and were making for the boat with a tub each.

A great commotion then ensued. Those who could walk staggered towards us drawing their pistols; but too late, the boat was already in deep water, and Jack did not need to be told to put his back into the work of rowing us out.

"Gosh! that was a near one," exclaimed the Captain as a bullet whistled by his head. Three or four more reports rang out, but the men were too far under the influence of liquor to shoot straight.

A great cheer then greeted our ears from the villagers, and sandwiched in between the shouting and laughter we could hear the officers raving and swearing.

"Jumping Moses!" exclaimed the Captain, "I can hear the Preventive men launching their boat. I thought they were too drunk for that."

We all heard the boat's keel grating on the shingle.

"A boat without oars," gasped Jack in reassuring tones, "is like a purse without money —no good."

"Aye, aye, lad! I hear them shouting for 'em."

And so they did in vain, nor could they find an oar or a scull anywhere ; and altho' our progress with the great weight which we were towing was painfully slow, yet night had already robbed us of any sight of shore, and only the threats of brandy-sodden officials smarting under their defeat came to us across the water.

Well, we so disposed of our cargo that night that the Government officials never had a chance of seeing it again.

I heard afterwards that they were even done out of what remained in the keg which they had broached. Old Tom Crago thought that he was entitled to this as a reward for his trouble in the matter, and watching his opportunity amid the general uproar, waltzed away with it.

CHAPTER IV

A BURIAL AT NIGHT

For a day or two after the incidents described in the last chapter I lay low, my chief concern being to find out how much of the true circumstances the officers knew.

I had no trouble in finding suitable hiding-quarters, and a couple of nights later Captain Simon called on me.

"Hell's alight and boiling over!" he said by way of opening the conversation. "They're mad as dogs, and are after you."

"Are they?"

"They know you were my bo'sun, and suspect you of engineering the job. They also remember you had something to do with the Kestle business."

I said—

"Oh! they are up against me, then."

"They've sworn to have you, hot meat or cold meat."

"Aren't you afraid yourself?" I asked.

"Heave a lead! No, they can't touch me. I'm too old for Government service, and they have got no evidence to lay any charge against me."

"But they never recognised me," I argued.

"Being the right age, and with your reputation, they will conjure up any complaint against you and 'press' you in the Navy quicker than you can say puddin'; why, shiver my stumps, we've lost all our bright lads like that."

"What had I best do, Cap'n?"

"Quit, my son, unless you are particularly anxious to serve King George III. This 'll stop trade here for a couple of months, so you 'll lose nothing."

I took the Cap'n's tip and left the coast-line for inland. I served as a farm hand on the glebe for Parson Bennetts, the Rector of Lantewey, about two miles in on the north coast. The Rector was one of the old sort, easygoing and fond of all kinds of sport.

"Why did you give up the sea, Hawken, for this work?" he asked me one day.

"Owing to a little dispute or two, sir," I said, as if it didn't matter.

"Ah, any Preventive men in it?" he went on in a pleasant tone.

"Yes, sir, a few."

"You got the better of them, I hope," he said piously.

"Slightly," I replied, and then I told him some of my experiences, which he seemed to enjoy.

A little while after he approached me again.

"If you hear of a 'run' I should like to stand in, Hawken, and I know that some of my parishioners would follow me."

I said—

"I'm a bit out of touch with it for the moment, and this is some way from a port, or I dare say I could manage it, sir."

"We all want some tea badly, and what we pay fifteen shillings a pound for here isn't worth drinking. Of course, we shouldn't object also to a cask of brandy, which is always useful in case of illness."

"Quite so, sir," I said.

"Drive into Newquay and see if anything can be arranged. No names must be mentioned, you understand."

As I was about setting out on my journey in

the Rectory trap the Rector's daughter came along.

" Oh, Hawken, father has told me of his conversation with you, and I do hope you will be successful. Some of my poor people here haven't tasted tea for months."

I said, " I 'll do my best, Miss," and I thought of the many hundredweights of tea I had brought over during the last two years.

Arrived at Newquay, I had to proceed tactfully. I asked a quay lounger it he knew of a lugger for sale.

" Not as I know of," he replied, " but Captain Rickard here can tell you best."

" Cap'n Rickard," I repeated to myself, for the name seemed familiar.

I turned and put the same question to the Captain, who was seated on a bench gazing dreamily seawards, and without responding he rose and made a straight line for the nearest public-house or " Tiddley Wink," as it was then called.

As he glanced round to see if I was following, I thought I had better do so.

" I can talk to you better in here," he said, planting himself snugly into the corner of a

settle, "there 's too many long-eared owls on the quay to please me. Now, what is it you want ?"

"Are you Cap'n Rickard of *The Maria Drake ?*"

"That 's her—from bowsprit to rudder."

"Do you know Skipper Martin of *The Happy Fanny ?*"

"Mevagissey Martin ? I know him well, tho' I haven't seen him for months. I hear he 's laid up."

"He 's got the rheumatics," I put in. Then I said, "Do you remember when you and he stayed up all night trying to learn French, and *The Happy Fanny* and *The Maria Drake* missed the morning tide ?"

"Not so fast, young man," broke in the Captain.

"I sailed with *The Happy Fanny* two years," I said in a reassuring tone.

"You did ?" Then he pushed towards me a tubby hand, which I grasped. "Did I hear you wanted to buy a boat ?" he asked with some surprise.

"If I can get no one to sail her for me."

The Captain looked at me quizzically for a

minute. "Got any venturers?" he then asked.

"Yes."

"I 'm waiting for another thirty pounds venture money."

"I can find it."

"All right; if the weather keeps fine I 'll have a 'run' on the next neap. What district will suit yer best?"

"Mawgan Porth is handiest for me," I said.

"That 'll suit me prime."

So it was fixed up. The Rector and the well-to-do of his flock got the venture money together, which I handed over to Rickard, and we were to await tidings of arrival.

"A fishwoman has driven over, Hawken, to report that she 's just been sighted, and will land to-night at eleven o'clock," said the Rector to me about noon a fortnight later, trying to conceal his excitement.

"That 's good news, sir," I said.

"I want you to call on Farmer Grigg, Mr. Callaway the magistrate, Squire Trethewey, and Farmer Rice, and convey to them the information. You should, if possible, see them personally in each case and mention my name."

The round was one of eight miles, and I struck out on the nearest path, which was through the churchyard. There I noticed the sexton digging a grave for the purposes of a funeral next day.

"Any news of her, Wes?" shouted this aged individual, whose head was just visible above ground.

"Aye, aye!" I replied, as I knew he was interested to the tune of a few pounds of tea.

"I wisht with all me 'eart you would look arter my little lot of tay. Parson's got the money."

I said—

"You 'll be all right, Malachi."

I spread the good tidings, and delivered one or two other messages to some of the parson's friends, who were also standing in. The reply which I was charged to take back was that they were all either coming or sending for their contraband.

"Hawken," said my employer on my return, "you will go down with the market cart, and you had better take the farm-boy with you to look after it. I shall walk."

The road from the Rectory to the Porth

meandered down a vale through an avenue of trees almost the whole distance.

It was a fine starlight night, and I reached the scene of action about ten o'clock.

The sea was unusually quiet. The breakers, small and uniform in size, broke with mechanical regularity, and their rumblings seemed in tune with coming events.

The tide was fast approaching, and had already reached three parts of its flow. A stranger might have passed along this part of the coast and observed no sign of life, the horses and carts to be used in the moving of the contraband being drawn up under the tamarisk hedges bordering the bay.

The Rector was there with a horn lantern, his trousers tucked up to the knee, wearing an old pair of boots and no stockings.

"The tide couldn't be better," he said, with just a touch of pleasurable emotion in his voice, and the band of supporters under the shade of the trees cordially agreed with him.

"Have they got a big cargo?" he asked of Squire Trethewey, who never intentionally missed supporting a "run" in this district.

"I heard that Rickard took venture money

for over one hundred tubs and a hundredweight and a half of tea," was the reply.

Another stated that Jack Polgoose, the blacksmith, was collecting forty tubs for a party at St. Columb.

"Here they come!" exclaimed one, and glancing seawards we detected a speck of light.

The Rector put a lucifer to the candle in his lantern, and waving this to and fro, proceeded down the centre of the bay.

After an interval of a few minutes the dull thud of a heavy oar could be heard as the crew straightened her up, then the smack, assisted by the tide, slowly came into view, and beached herself a few yards in front of the Rector.

Half a dozen willing hands laid hold of the rope that was thrown to them, and a liné of some score of men formed up from the shore to the boat. Along this line were handed the tubs and parcels of tea wrapped in oilskin, the Rector the while lighting up the scene.

"Now, gentlemen!" announced the Captain's land agent, who had been checking the goods as they were landed, "please let me have your names as you take your stuff away."

" Parson Bennetts, do you take liability for the fifteen pounds balance ? "

" Yes, certainly, I 'll take responsibility," said the Rector, coming forward.

" Then there 's eighteen tubs for you and fifty-six pounds of tea. Show a light here a minute. Here we are," and he counted out eighteen tubs and two twenty-eight pound packets of tea.

The Rector and his party now approached the goods, and divided them up in accordance with their orders.

The blacksmith brought two carts and took away forty tubs, and farmers brought horses like phantoms from the shadows, and deftly slinging a brace of tubs on their backs, disappeared in the darkness again.

" Hawken," said the Rector, " have you seen Mr. Callaway the magistrate here ? "

" No, sir."

" I shall have to take his lot back with me. Fetch the cart and put these five tubs and this packet of tea in it ! "

When this was done the Rector covered them up with a piece of old sailcloth and sent the boy off home to wait our arrival.

A few minutes afterwards, having got the trawler well afloat again, the Rector and I walked home.

"Did you meet anybody?" I asked the boy, taking charge of the contraband.

"Yus, plenty in the bay."

"No, since you left the bay?" I continued.

"I saw two men at the four turnings."

"Did they say anything?"

"They asked me where I was going to, and I said I was going home to the Rectory; then they says 'Good night.'"

"Who were they?"

"I dunno."

"You better go to bed," I said.

I then spoke to the Rector about it.

"I don't like the look of it, Hawken," he said with some alarm. "These Preventive men, I believe, are in the habit of hanging about cross roads."

I said—

"They are an artful lot, and don't always act as one would expect."

"Of course, if they had their suspicions aroused, they would naturally be after bigger game than a farm-boy."

"Yes, sir, we may see them again I 'm thinking; they will want to catch you, not the boy."

"What can we do?"

I said—

"Don't trouble, sir, I 'll put the goods away somewhere safely."

After breakfast next day the Rector sent for me.

"Malachi has been in and says it is reported that there were Preventive men about last night, and they nearly caught Farmer Rice with a couple of tubs slung across his horse's back. The farmer galloped through them and got away. Are ours safe?"

"Yes, sir. I shouldn't go out to-day if I were you, sir. I should go to bed and put off that funeral till to-morrow."

"Perhaps you are right, Hawken; I 'm not feeling very well. Tell Malachi to postpone the funeral."

At noon two full-uniformed Preventive men drove up to the Rectory.

"We have a search warrant granted to-day to search this house and premises for smuggled goods," said the chief to the Rector's daughter.

"What! I never heard of such a thing," she replied in disgust.

"Here 's the warrant," went on the man.

"My father is indisposed and in bed. I will tell him if you 'll wait a minute," she answered icily.

They didn't wait, though, they commenced their search straightaway. They felt certain they were on the right track this time.

"Father says of course the law must be obeyed, and the whole house and grounds are at your disposal," was the message which the invalid sent them.

I guessed the Rector would be worried, so after the men had gone I reported it to him.

"They looked everywhere, sir," I said, "and went away growling with disappointment."

"Did they go through the grounds?"

"Yes, sir, and all through the buildings and the church and churchyard."

"Surely not the church?"

"Yes, they did, sir, and as they left they touched their helmets to Miss Bennetts, who was placing some flowers on the new grave."

"The new grave? Why, the funeral is not till to-morrow."

"I had a burial all to myself last night, sir."

"You don't mean to say you ——"

"Yes, sir, and there 's many worse hiding-places. You didn't put off the funeral for nothing."

CHAPTER V

A MOONLIGHT RACE

I ARRANGED two or three more "runs" with Captain Rickard during the next twelve months, and then something happened which caused me to shift my quarters again.

The Maria Drake was bringing in one night a mixed cargo in which the Rector and a few neighbours were standing in to the tune of forty pounds of French tea.

The place of landing was a snug little cove just west of Newquay, and some ten miles away.

We had had no further trouble with uniform men, and never expected any this time; but the presence of spies, however, had been reported, and this possibility alone caused us to proceed warily.

"Was the time mentioned?" asked the Rector after I had told him that the news of arrival had been received.

"Yes, sir," I replied, "anywhere from dusk till midnight."

" You had best saddle the cob and get away."

From the customers whom I encountered on the road to the landing-place I learnt that Rickard was bringing in the biggest load which he had ever " run."

" Rickard is a fool, I think," said one, " to cater for such a crowd."

"It 's been the talk of the district for days," enjoined another. " It isn't safe to trade so openly as it was years agone."

" Up the country they are putting a lot of these Preventive men in private clothes I hear," continued the first speaker.

There appeared to be a deal of reason in this conversation, which was not lost on me.

During the unloading a lot of tub-tapping was indulged in, especially amongst the stalwart young farmers, but this didn't interest me. The Skipper passed round a seven-pound plug of black twist, and when most of them had helped themselves to an extra large quid apiece, irrespective of whether they were accustomed to a chew or not, the effect of the tobacco juice on the brandy was the reverse of sobering.

I had just mounted the cob with a twenty-pound parcel of tea slung on each side of

the pommel, when a lad came running down to the water's edge, and in a breathless voice exclaimed—

"The road is blocked with 'wentive men; they 've catched Farmer Grigg and two cart-loads of tubs besides, and they 'll catch 'em all."

To those who like myself had to wait for our goods this was like a bombshell.

"There 's five or six of 'em, they 've all got pistols, and have dragged a wagon across the road so as yer can't get through," went on the lad, as if anxious to let us have the worst news early.

"Any other way out of the bay?" I asked.

"Not for a cart, but as you 're riding, you can get out by going up over the cliff if yer know the track."

"Do you know the way?" put in someone else.

"I know the road in daylight, but I never tried to find it at night."

"What 's up, me hearties?" came Captain Rickard's voice across the water.

"Customs men have got the lot," was the response.

"I always said this place would prove a terrible trap if ever we were caught," shouted

the Captain, who only had a few minutes to wait for the tide to float him out. "Anybody want to come aboard?"

"I 'll come," came from half a dozen throats, and leaving their horses (and in some cases the carts) to find their way home as best they could, they accepted the invitation, and by the aid of a lifeline scrambled aboard with their goods, preferring the hospitality of *The Maria Drake* and the open sea to that offered by running the blockade.

I headed the procession of horsemen led by the lad who was to show us the track up from the cove to the cliff-top. The steepness of the ascent, the uneven ground and bad light, rendered the adventure of some risk. A false step or slip arising from an unsound foothold meant trouble from which there was no recovery. Our guide, however, was equal to the emergency, and safely piloted us to the open fields above.

"The only way out to the road," he said, "is through a gate at the far end of this field, and another gate away round to the right in the next field."

"Are there no fences we can get through?" asked one of the party.

"No," was the cheerless reply, "they 're all stone hedges, and unless you 've got summin'll jump like a rabbert that 's the only way out."

There were four of us, and we proceeded to hold a council of war.

"I think we 'd best separate," suggested one, "some of us then are bound to get through."

"I don't know that I shan't wait for daylight," said another. "I can't gallop with a load like this," and he lightly tapped his four tubs slung in pairs with his hunting-crop.

As I decided to go on, there was nothing else to do but bid them good night.

I must have missed the second gate as directed, which opened on to the main road, and rather than retrace my steps I decided to try the cob at what appeared to be a fairly low fence, which I could discern by the light of the moon. She got over, but not without shaking herself up very considerably by her contact with the hard road, to which no doubt the extra weight of the tea contributed.

Her hoofs had no sooner commenced to ring out on the highway when other hoof-beats behind me broke the stillness. The sharp detonations proclaimed the fact that there were

two horsemen coming at a rapid rate. The thought immediately flashed through my brain. Were these extra King's men posted at the gate which I had missed to intercept the riders who would be sure to use this, the only alternative means of escape? They could easily have heard the cob strike the road and trot away.

We were all in earshot of each other, but owing to the meandering of the road we were neither in view. Over a short distance the cob was fast, and I hoped to dishearten my pursuers early in the race.

I quickened my pace, and to my dismay noticed another man on horseback in front, apparently waiting for me. I now had to see it through whether I wanted to or not. It was too late to think about ridding myself of my load. A moment later I was level with the waiting enemy. I carried no stick or whip, but I kept my fist ready in case it was wanted. He turned his horse, and broke into a brisk canter by my side. At first glance I could see he was not in the Preventive Service, he was much too young and fragile.

"Oh, Hawken, the men are about, father saw them!"

"Why, Miss Bennetts!"

"You didn't know me? They have come over from the south coast. I came to warn you. No, don't stop, please."

"Why, you are riding old Farmer Rice's Beeswing!"

"Yes, I borrowed it, as well as father's riding-breeches. Are you being followed?"

"I think so, Miss," I replied.

"I thought you were, I heard them. Let me take the tea. Nothing around here can catch Beeswing; the cob can't last much longer."

"We are getting away from them a little, I guess," I replied; "but you go on, give Beeswing her head, don't wait for me."

"No, let me have the cob, and you ride mine. I 'll hide in the wood. Oh, my poor cob, she 'll kill herself! I insist. We have time to change."

"Will you hide in the wood, Miss, till I come back and fetch you?" I asked, as I could see she had made her mind up that this would solve the problem.

"Yes, you come back when it 's all safe."

We changed saddles, and I strapped the contraband on to Beeswing none too soon; but I

knew that with their already tired horses Farmer Rice's mare would make circles round them.

Leaving Miss Bennetts to hide in the wood, I went forward, and disappearing round a bend in the road, eased up.

The report of voices, and then two pistol shots rang out on the quiet night, followed by a woman's scream.

I cut away the packages of tea, flung them in the ditch, and galloped back.

Miss Bennetts was lying on a mossy bank on the edge of the wood, her head resting on the arm of a full-uniformed horseman. Instinctively he gave way to me, and as he rose her hat fell off, and her hair fell in waves of tawny gold over her shoulders.

"My God! a woman!" groaned the man.

Heavy clouds now obscured the moon and plunged the scene in sombre shadows. I leant over her, and to my unspeakable relief heard her still breathing.

"Which one of you has got to swing for this?" I asked in a firm tone as I felt her warm blood oozing through my sleeve on to my arm.

"My assistant, Job Ockaday, claimed that his ball hit her," replied the chief.

"Oh, so you would hang one another, I suppose!" I said venomously.

"We are Customs officers," continued the principal pompously. "We saw a man we believed to be smuggling trying to hide in the wood. He didn't halt when challenged, so we had to fire."

"What, smuggling in a wood?"

"No, we've been chasing him, that is—her up from the bay."

The ordeal of waiting for the light was one I guarantee the men remembered all their lives. Now and again the hoot of an owl came up from the wood, and the breeze in its fitfulness moaned through the trees.

I felt her move slightly, and her heart beat strongly. When at last the moon swung clear and shone on the men I recognised the chief, though to him I was a stranger.

"So you have taken to shooting at women now!" I said viciously, hardly knowing how to keep my hands off him.

The thrust went home, I saw him wince. It was the man who some years ago had pinched my wrist with the handcuffs and made it bleed —the man with the ginger whiskers.

CHAPTER VI

THE TRIAL OF JACK CREGAN

My employer's daughter had swooned from fright and shock caused by nothing more serious than a flesh wound on the shoulder. The bleeding soon stopped, and after dressing the injury she was able within an hour to proceed homeward on horseback unassisted. As it was a warm autumn night, no unfavourable development ensued to retard a speedy recovery. The officers, having obtained the name and address of their victim, hung about until they felt their presence was no longer necessary or welcome, and this enabled us to salve the uncustomed tea.

A couple of days later I had a chat with the Rector.

"Will they report the incident to headquarters do you think, Hawken?" he asked.

"I have no doubt they will, sir, and an inquiry by secret agents into the circumstances will follow for certain."

"Your position here, Hawken, will then be disclosed, and tend to add further to their suspicions."

"That is so, sir, and I have been thinking that I ought to leave you, both for your own sake and mine."

Thus it came about that I quitted the Rector's service and went farther west.

From the tips and gratuities received from Rickard and his customers I had beside me a tidy sum of money, and my object was to join up in partnership with someone whom I could trust and become, so to speak, a master in my own trade.

I had heard that my old friend, Jack Cregan, was working down the Lizard way, and with my bundle on my shoulder, I set out in that direction to obtain news of his movements. *En route* I gathered that the Customs men that night had collared two-thirds of *The Maria Drake*'s cargo, that the customers, on realising their danger, bolted to a man, leaving the collection of the contraband an easy job for the officers, and that the prize-money earned for the night's work couldn't be much short of two hundred and fifty pounds.

After I had taken my bearings at the Lizard, I inquired of an elderly seafaring resident, whose trousers came up to his arm-pits, if he could give me any tidings of Captain Cregan.

He looked up at me through two great mops of scraggy eyebrows for half a minute, then he said—

"Jack Cregan?"

"That 's him," I replied.

Then he spat far into the air and changed sides with his chew.

"Yas, Jack 's in Bodmint Jail."

"What 's he been doing?" I asked.

"Nothin' as I know by. Jack was too tender-hearted to tread on a whitneck."

"What 's against him, then?" I pursued.

"There was a little dust up here a fortnight agone with a Government man—interfering, I call it—and he got more 'n he 'spected, but not more 'n he desarved. Didn't yer hear 'bout it, young fella?"

I said—

"No."

"Jack 's to be tried next week, and as sure as my name is Captain Jabez Hocking, I 'm going up, and good many more 's going up."

"This is bad news, I put in.

"Did you knaw Jack?"

"I sailed under him for two years."

Captain Hocking lifted his great eyebrows, and with them the fore part of his scalp, monkey-like, and scanned the sea for awhile in meditation.

"I 'm not going to say," he went on, "as Jack didn't take risks he 'd no bisnis to take, but he was as nice a man for all that as you could wish to meet."

Further conversation elicited the address of Jack's new house, and I was able to renew acquaintanceship with his wife and condole with her in her sorrow.

As might be expected, the little town was all agog with excitement in regard to the coming trial at Bodmin Assizes, and a big pilgrimage set out the day before the event in order to be present at the proceedings.

"Can we do anything, think you, Cap'n, to help him?" I asked old Jabez more than once on the journey.

"What can yer do when the Lunnon Laws have got hold of 'en?" Then, with emotion, he added, "If we see 'en at all most likely he 'll

be in an iron cage no bigger than a crab-pot, bound hand and foot."

"'Tisn't justice!" I said.

"Justice from Lunnon! If we as much as offered 'en a pasty they 'd hang us in the jail that night!" and in lifting his eyebrows and scalp in his wrath the Captain's ears twitched against his skull.

What with jurymen, witnesses, representatives of the police, and Preventive Service and spectators, the Court was packed full half an hour before the proceedings commenced.

"Be I right?" said the man next to me, pushing a piece of paper in my hand. It was a jury summons addressed to "Wm. Hawken, farmer, Callington," commanding him to attend Court that day, and fail not at his peril.

Returning the summons, I said, "Yes, this is right," not knowing anything about it, but somehow feeling very pleased that I was so near one of the jury who was evidently to try Jack. If I could only get a word in his ear.

"Is this the right place?" he inquired again.

I nodded, and, after a minute, whispered—

"You 've got to try a friend of mine to-day."

My neighbour took no notice. I tried him

again : " Case of an accident to a Preventive man," but he never moved a muscle.

I gave him a nudge.

" Do you know the Lizard ? " I asked.

" What 'ee say ? "

" The Lizard ! " I repeated a bit louder.

" Wot ? " and he bent a little towards me, spreading his hand out behind his ear.

" The Lizard ! The Lizard Lights ! "

" Israelites ! What about 'em ? "

He looked at me vacantly, and my hopes fell to zero, for I realised that he was stone deaf.

" How many jurors have been summoned," asked the Clerk of the Court in a pompous tone, adjusting his wig.

" Thirty, sir," was the response.

" Empanel the first twelve," he ordered, as he handed his snuff-box around to the other gentlemen in wigs, who were conversing in easy attitudes near by.

" The jurors whose names are now called will take their places in the jury-box," announced an official. " Thomas Tabb, Isaiah Nichols. Clear the gangway for the jurors to pass. Joseph Brenton, Thomas Tuman, Zachariah

Olver. Come forward, please. Samuel Hoskin, John Champion, Daniel Couch, Solomon Grigg. Move up in your places quicker, gentlemen. Richard Tremain, Joseph Luke, and William Hawken."

My neighbour never moved, so I said to myself: "Blow-me-tight, I 'll be William Hawken," and, jumping up, followed close on the heels of the last man, and in a minute found myself one of the jury empanelled to well and truly try, and a true verdict give, in a charge against my old friend Jack Cregan.

I might be able to help him yet, in spite of the rigours of the law.

The other jurymen were discharged till the next day, and an hour or two later I noticed my deaf friend, still unaware of what had happened, show his summons to a policeman. The guardian of the peace, no doubt, thought he was one of the twenty not called nor required till the morrow, and after vainly trying in a subdued tone to explain this to him, took him outside the Court and drummed it into his noddle there.

A few minutes after we had settled ourselves there was a great fanfare of trumpets and shouting of "Silence!" and with a lot of pomp and

bowing, the Judge, arrayed in ermine and scarlet, took his seat.

"Rex versus Cregan!" announced the Clerk affably.

A dull sound like the shuffling of feet reached us, and in another minute Jack, preceded and followed by a warder, stepped from under the floor into the dock.

He seemed stunned, and like a man in a dream. He gaped around him, but appeared to see nothing.

The case against him was explained to us in a long address by a lawyer chap from London.

"The prisoner," he said, "is charged with the wilful murder, under very revolting circumstances, of John Wills, an officer in His Majesty's Preventive Service. Cregan was master of a cutter-rigged boat, which on the night in question was engaged in running a cargo of contraband brandy at the Lizard. In so doing he was committing a felony. The officer, be it said to his credit, pluckily interfered to prevent this breach of the law, and to bring the ringleaders to justice; but he was set on by one or more members of the gang of law-breakers, forcibly taken to low-water mark some distance from

the scene, there bound hand and foot, and in this helpless condition he was left to drown by the incoming tide. Fortunately we have evidence that the chief instigator of this dastardly crime was the prisoner, and it is upon that evidence, gentlemen of the jury, that I confidently ask you to convict him."

The first witness called gave me a bit of a jolt. It was a Preventive officer—no other than my old enemy Ginger. He traced Jack's history from the start, describing his connection with *The Happy Fanny* and the suspicious death of Kestle, who was a plain-clothes Government man, and how Jack, finding it too hot for him in the Mevagissey district, migrated farther west, and he generally wrapped it up for him pretty hard and tight. On being told to address his remarks more directly to the jury, he looked straight at me. Surely he had recognised me! Then the thought struck me that this was the first time that we had seen one another in daylight, and since our first meeting I had developed and grown an abundance of whiskers, also how different I must look now to what I did by moonlight in my working clothes a couple of weeks ago. No, his gaze was only a roving one,

for he was now looking at someone else. I noticed, however, that he had different coloured eyes, and that some of his front teeth were missing—an honourable scar—no doubt the outcome of a jab in the mouth by an offended trader. Altogether he looked up to his reputation—a rough customer.

I succeeded while this evidence was being given in catching Jack's eye. He stared at me in a bewildered way for quite a while, and then hung his head, but I noticed that after this encounter he braced himself up better, and appeared more independent, and like his old self.

It was obvious that some of the other witnesses who followed had been discovered as having "stood in" the cargo, and were giving evidence against Jack under coercion and threats of prosecution.

There was an expectant silence when the Judge started in sonorous tones to weigh matters up.

"Gentlemen of the Jury," he began, "you must all share with me, I venture to think, the horror which I experienced in hearing the details of this diabolical crime. You must all feel aghast at the suggestion that

a Cornishman—native of a county renowned for its love of the law and the principles of Christianity—could have been the chief instigator of such an act of barbarous savagery. At the same time you must deplore with me that the records of this delectable county should be so stained—immortally stained, if what the prosecution say is correct—by such an inhuman monster as stands before you. It may be that you will have your opportunity now, gentlemen, of purging the page of the blot which has disfigured your fair land, and—of course it follows—of stamping out the slur which it is alleged the prisoner's action has cast upon it. You must rejoice with me in the satisfaction I feel that the arm of the law is both strong and long enough to effectively grapple with such malefactors as the prisoner is stated to be."

After reviewing the evidence at length, he finished up with another half hour's exhortation to convict Jack of murder if we believed in the case against him, and he thought we should have no difficulty in coming to a speedy and unanimous decision.

We then retired to the dark and grimy jury-room, and as soon as we were safely ensconced

the key was turned in the door from the outside, not to be opened until a verdict was arrived at.

To my surprise, no one mentioned the subject of the trial. They talked of everything else. Those who hadn't previously an opportunity of shaking hands did so cordially. They gathered together in knots of twos and threes, and discussed the weather, farming, and horses. Some produced little sample bags of the latest threshings of corn for inspection, others exchanged snuff-boxes and handed round flasks of brandy that it is safe to say had never passed through the Customs.

By this time we were all very hungry, having had no food since breakfast, which in most cases was a very early one. The smallest man stooped down and shouted through the keyhole to the janitor outside.

"Hi! we 'em starvin'! Can't us have somethin' to eat?"

"Haven't yer come to a verdict yet?" came the response.

"No, and not likely to till we get some food."

"How many wants to eat?"

"All of us. What do yer think we live on, cobwebs?"

"I must ask the Judge, then," said the man, and in a few minutes he returned with a message that the Judge was very surprised we hadn't reached a verdict, but that some food should be sent in. This was shortly followed by a great joint of cold roast beef and loaves of bread, and we fell to and ate the lot.

"What are we going to do?" ventured a burly farmer, drawing the back of his hand across his mouth to brush away any crumbs that clung there. "I've got a long way to go to-night, and my old hoss is as lame as a dog."

"I'm going your way, Mr. Tabb, and my mare can't go very fast," spoke Mr. Grigg, who by common consent had been elected foreman. "I suppose we shall have to hang 'en. I don't see any other way out of it. I wish I did."

"Hear! hear!" broke in two or three voices.

"Be all us agreed, then?" he went on, and from the ready response it seemed that Jack's life was hanging on a piece of rope-yarn.

"Now, what 'ee say," he continued with a snap, boldly looking at me in consequence of my silence, "shall us hang 'en or no?"

"Yes," I said, "if hanging will bring the other man back to life again."

This remark was rewarded with a titter from the assembly, and a voice said—

"Well done, mister!"

Eyeing the man next to me he said—

"Hang 'en or no, Mr. Luke?"

"The gipsy they hanged two years ago is hanging in chains still close to me on St. Kew highway, and I don't want any more there, no, not for all the Preventive men in the country," concluded Mr. Luke defiantly.

The foreman repeated the question to the next man, Mr. Olver.

"I don't hold with these 'ere taxes, and I don't hold with taking life. You go on, I 'll think it over," slowly responded this juror.

The foreman pursued his course.

"Hang 'en or no, Mr. Hoskin?"

"Well, I had 'a venture' in that cargo meself, and according to the old Judge 'venturers' was as bad as shippers; so if I hang 'en, it 's like hangin' meself, and you know, Solomon, I beant such a fool as that!"

The foreman hastened along. In the dim light he could hardly recognise Mr. Nichols.

"Shall us hang 'en or no?"

" Hang 'en, what for ? He never killed the man, 'twas the water that killed him."

" Now, Mr. Tremain, what say ? "

" We ought to hang 'en, and I should see that he *was* hanged if I stayed here all night, only we 've got a little ' run ' on at Salt Water Mill, which we fixed up to-day, because all the Government men would be here at the Assizes, and I want to get away."

" Hang 'en or no, John ? "

The foreman this time was dealing with his distant relation, Mr. Champion.

" If we hang a man every time a Preventive officer loses his life, soon we shan't have a man left in the county."

The same question was now put to Mr. Couch.

" Altho' I 've been asked to hang scores of men in me time, up to now I 've only hung 'em for sheep-stealing, and at sixty-five I am too old to change me mind," was the laconic reply.

Mr. Brenton, the only teetotaller of the party, came next.

" I say hang 'en. I know 'en. Years ago he used to break into my orchard and steal my apples. I thought he would come to this."

This was a situation which had to be tackled

promptly. One dissentient voice meant a disagreement of the jury, and a new trial with a fresh one. I recalled the orchard to which he referred, and the man's name was familiar to me.

"Your apples," I broke in, in as disinterested a manner as I could command, "were never worth stealing. They were too sour to eat. You used to try and sell them to the sailors in Mevagissey at sixpence a gallon."

A contemptuous guffaw greeted my remarks, which completely turned the tables upon Mr. Brenton.

"You can't hang a man for stealing sour apples!" exclaimed one.

"You don't drink zider, so the old apples was no good to you, my dear man," rubbed in another.

"You 're more to blame than he is for trying to take in the poor fishermen by sellin' 'em such stuff," said a third.

"Come on, gentlemen, it 's getting late!" expostulated another, "I lost three pigs once by giving 'em apples not fit to eat."

"Oh, very well, then," said the discomfited Mr. Brenton sadly, "go on; do as you like."

"Now, Mr. Tabb, it 's your turn," pursued the foreman.

" Oh, well, Mr. Grigg, I 'm of the same opinion as you."

" Is that all ? " asked the foreman, reaching the starting-point.

" No," said someone, " there 's Mr. Tuman."

At this moment a profound snoring pervaded the room, and the subject of the inquiry was observed seated in a corner sound asleep.

" Leave 'en alone, Solomon," considerately advised Mr. Hoskin, " I reckon he 's tired. Got a cow bad, and he 's been up with her all night." So Mr. Tuman was left to finish his nap.

" Then we 'em all agreed, gentlemen, that he 's not guilty," was the decision of the foreman, and with it Jack Cregan, much to the disgust of the Government, was again a free man.

CHAPTER VII

A REVISIT AND A PARTING

I THOUGHT it wise to steer clear of Jack when he was liberated, so leaving him to the care of his wife, Old Jabez, and many other friends, struck out for my home. Plenty of chances offered for a "lift," and, moreover, I hadn't seen my mother for nearly twelve months.

As Hawken was a common name, I had no qualms that my trick of impersonation would be discovered. Those who didn't know me assumed that I was William Hawken, and those who did know me I felt could be relied on to keep their mouths shut. Although I spoke as little about the trial as possible, and when asked anything gave evasive answers, yet my subterfuge had got abroad, and my reputation in consequence was very great.

Skipper Martin was still bedridden with rheumatism, and a pitiable figure. He had wasted away to a bag of bones and swollen joints. When I tried to entertain him with

titbits of smuggling I found he had turned very religious, and had lost all interest in this side-line of his past. *The Happy Fanny*, which was regarded by likely purchasers as too ancient and slow for a "trader," had been broken up.

A few days later tidings came to hand of a big fight with the enemy off Polperro, and I hastened there to ascertain further particulars. After two such tests as I had recently gone through, I had no fear of being recognised now.

Captain Simon Davey, I found, had played the leading rôle in an encounter between *The Goldfinch* and a Revenue cutter.

"Zimon," as he was called, had bagged a brace of slugs, and was too ill to see anyone. I had to get my information, therefore, from the mate. Unfortunately, he was not in a happy mood, having had a couple of fingers shot away and a nasty scalp wound in the same shindy, and in addition, not knowing much of me, he was inclined to be reticent.

I waited my time, however, and soon heard all about it.

"The 'fernal mischief was," he said in his account, "that the King's men, both ashore and afloat, never forgave Zimon for what he done a year or two back, when you and he took the

stuff away right onder their snouts. They allays threatened to get even wid 'en, and 'stead of sayin' nothin', which as you know was against the nature of the man, he allays told 'em he was ready for 'em any time at any caper they fancied. ' You catch me fair and square,' he 'd tell 'em, ' and you can do what you like with me, but if I don't get a stiff neck afore you lubbers put me in the gibbet, by thunder ! I shall have a long time to wait for one.' "

" Yes," I said by way of encouragement, " the Cap'n was always a fighting man."

" We had a couple of score of tubs aboard—maybe a bit more. The wind was dropping, and we reckoned 'twould take us all our time to make shore comfortable before dark, considering as there was no moon. Ten mile out or so we spied a cutter coming down Channel with every stitch of sail she could put up.

" I says, ' Here 's a mess, Cap'n ! She 's got the full tide and all the breeze behind her. We shall have to heave 'em overboard.'

" ' I 'll see 'em all to Kingdom Come afore I do that ; and if you 're narvous, you git out and walk home on the bottom ! '

" He spoke terrible fierce, and scowled like a man havin' his leg sawed off.

" I says, ' There 's nobody here as wants to do that.'

" He folded his arms, and took a turn up and down the deck as savage as a bull. ' Git up the muskets ! ' he hollers. ' Charge 'em and stand by. We 'll show 'em we don't tolerate no privateerin' tricks on the open sea.' He glanced round, had a line or two hauled tight and the jib set a bit higher. Then he swore three long separate oaths as long as the tops'l halliards, and was all pleasant again, and as lively as a rat in a sugar ship.

" ' Take her thirty points more to wind'ard, Jan,' he says to me, smilin', and he opened his mouth to say somethin' else, but a heavy dull sound broke down on us, and a shot skipped over the water ahead, then buried itself with a hiss in a chop a little bigger than the others.

" ' Every hand to a musket and lay down,' he said, ' we shall soon be out of this.'

" I didn't understand what he meant till I looked for'ard. Then I could see that if the breeze, which was dropping every minute, would serve us for another quarter of an hour we were all right.

" Bang ! The second shot was better aimed.

It struck the taffrail, and timber flied all over the place. That there was where I got this tap on the nut from a splinter.

"The cutter was overhauling us fast now. She was coming right down on our starboard quarter, but we couldn't alter our course.

"'Take a musket, Jan,' says Zimon, 'you can shoot better than me, but don't let that blood git in yer eyes. Keep yer head up more, and let it run down yer back.' So he took the helm, snapped off a fresh quid, and pitched to sing:—

> "'Eatin', drinkin 's very charmin',
> Smokin', chewin' is no harm in,
> But do not drink to excess,
> (For that is called drunkenness),
> When we are together.'

"The third shot was a trifle high. It passed clear over the deck, jest missed the boom, and made a round hole in the main sheet.

"'Don't fire, my dears, till *they* fire. This fight will be over in a minute or two, or you can heave me overboard for a busted ploughman.'

"No sooner had he spoken than the first musket volley rattled out.

"'Pay 'em back, my hearties! Pump lead into the lop-ear lepers!' shouted Zimon, and

all six of us popped our heads over the gun'ale and let go.

"It was getting a bit misty now, and in it the cutter loomed up to twice her size. Glancing ahead, I could see we was running in more of it, for it was rolling up in great clouds. We exchanged four more volleys as hard as we couldgo, and their balls was whizzing and singing all over us; and then the fog, which the Cap'n had been steering for, was so thick that we couldn't see nothing—it was like as if you 'd thrown a great blanket over us. The ship's boy, who was lying next to me, tried to rise, and fell over again on his face. He said he had got the cramp in his shoulder. I put my hand out to help him, and saw it was dripping with blood. I looked at it, and noticed that two of me fingers were gone, when or how I couldn't tell'ee. The boy hadn't got the cramp, he had a dose of lead in the shoulder; but they 've got it out, and he 's all right again now. The little wind that was left took us into the fog maybe a mile or so, then the light gave out and we let go anchor.

"'How many tubs have they peppered?' The Cap'n wheezed as he talked, and came up the deck oneasily, and supportin' hisself by anything he could lay his hand on.

" ' There 's only two smellin,' says one of the crew.

" ' Well, a drink will do us good,' he says, and bringing up a groan that made yer teeth rattle, he fell down all of a heap.

" We guessed what was up, so we laid him out. He had a slug between the shoulders, and one in the small of his back. We covered 'en up, and made 'en as snug as we could, and waited for the fog to rise. About midnight she cleared, so after plugging up the ball-holes in the boat, as there was no wind we got it out, muffled the oars, and spent four hours heavy pulling towing her in."

" Did you save the tubs ? " I asked.

" Yes, we sank them all right."

" Have you heard anything more of the cutter ? "

" No, they haven't come near us since, why should they ? They had nothing against us. Have yer heard how the Cap'n is to-day ? " he asked, changing his tone into one of sympathy.

" I am going to call, Jan," I replied, " and I'll let you know later."

I didn't tell him that I had called every day, and each time the report was less favourable than the previous one.

"'E's gettin' weaker," said the Captain's old housekeeper in response to my inquiries, "and the doctor don't seem able to do nothin' by 'en."

"You told him I had called?"

"Yes, and he do want to see yer bad, but the doctor says it 's best to keep 'en quiet."

"Have they got out the slugs yet?" I asked.

"No, there 's been two or three here cutting for 'em, but they can't find 'em."

"It 's a bad job," I said.

"'Tis a bad job, and he 's so meaty, too; and now the Cap'n 's stopped swearin' I don't like the look of it."

Next day she reported that he was much worse, but the doctor had said that if there was anyone whom the Captain particularly wanted to see he could do so.

I was therefore shown up the little rickety stairs to the sick-chamber. Hanging on a post of the bed were a pair of old oil-skins and a sou'wester. The invalid was very weak from loss of blood. Gone was the russet colour from his cheeks, and gone too was the fire in his eye. With a great effort, and under acute pain, he reached out his hand, which I gently grasped.

"I 've heard a good bit about yer, Bo'sun,

over across, from Rickard. I hear you 'm doing well," he said slowly, and between his troubled breathing. " Do yer mind how we dished 'em ? " and just a flicker of a smile passed over his features.

I said, " Yes, Cap'n, and we 'll dish 'em again afore we 've finished with 'em."

" No, jumpin' Moses ! not for Zimon, they 've nailed me this time."

" You 'll be up again directly," I said in a feeble effort at reassuring him.

" No, Wes, I shan't be long afore I slip me moorin's." Then he closed his eyes and continued in a weaker voice : " When they take me up to Talland I should like 'em to sink me up in the corner bearing about N.N.E. from the porch. I have a fancy for that there berth, do'ee hear ? It lays snug and quiet under the lee of the Squire's big vault. If yer hoist a stone, ask 'em if they can cut a grapnel on it, and put a bit of tarred drift-line round me plot, do'ee hear ? . . . That 's about all, Wes. . . . The wind 's arisin'. . . . I could always sleep best when it whistled through the riggin', so I think I 'll doze off."

And thus he drifted into his last slumber, and went out with the tide.

CHAPTER VIII

ENTER "THE GOLDFINCH"

AFTER the death of Captain Zimon I again journeyed in a westerly direction, with the view of meeting Jack. I found him at the Lizard ekeing out a livelihood by assisting the fishermen. They were all glad enough to help him, and when I caught sight of him he was on the beach surrounded, and almost buried, by great bundles of freshly-cut willow twigs, busy making crab-pots.

Squatted on a three-legged stool, the crab-pot being formed was turning somersaults every way, as he wound and clipped the plastic oziers.

What a change, I thought, between this peaceful scene and the last one, in which he was the central figure, when, as it seemed to me, everyone who spoke clamoured for his life.

On catching sight of me by his side, he pushed his hand quickly into mine, and for just a moment his under-lip trembled and moisture welled up in his eyes.

"I 've been expecting yer, Wes, for days," he said gleefully.

"I thought it best to wait a bit," I replied. "How are you getting on?"

"Tidy and quiet without me boat."

"Did they take her?"

"Yes, she was confiscated the same day, and I hear they have taken her up to Devonport."

"How are yer off for means, Jack?" I asked.

"Nothing to complain of, for when I came back they got up a subscription for me, and Squire Tregeagle put up ten pounds. They all knew I had no concern in it."

"Where did you run ashore?" I asked, glancing round the beach.

"Just over there," and he pointed to a spot fifty yards to the westwards. "I came in about three o'clock in the morning with the moon in the full, and *he* waited around the point for me from dusk."

"He had plenty of time to think about it, then."

"He did so, and while he waited he cut his name on the rock. I 'll show it to you directly."

"What about the other man?" I inquired.

"He was too afraid to turn up until every-

body most had cleared, then he went aboard the boat and put up the Government notice."

"He was in hiding, I suppose?"

"Yes, skeered out of his life. Said he was looking after his and his mate's horses. He came up to my house afterwards with a couple of pistols and fired a shot through my window. Next morning I was arrested."

"What about Wills?"

"He wouldn't have come to any harm, only he was too handy with his musket. He put a ball into someone, then they wouldn't stand it any longer, and took him away. I never saw him again."

"You were busy with the goods, Jack?"

"Yes," he replied, "my hands was full. Come round here and I will show you where he waited."

Jack pointed out a little ledge of rock some ten feet above sand level, and sheltered from the beach by a massive slate boulder, upon which Wills, with infinite pains, had carved his name—"J. Wills." Looking at it then, it struck me that some strange motive was at work that night which caused him thus to raise such an imperishable monument to his own memory.

Then Jack asked me what I had been doing, and I outlined my operations since we separated some two years ago at Polperro. As to the future, we tacitly agreed to join lots, and as between us we had sufficient means to buy a boat, we decided to make a bid for *The Goldfinch*. It occurred to us, however, that it would be advisable to carry out our negotiations for her from Roscoff, and so hoodwink the Customs men, who we knew would spare no pains to find out her ultimate destination.

Apart from this, we could also ascertain from the visitors there the state of the trade on this side, and what new Government Regulations, if any were in existence.

After some negotiations, we crossed on a smuggling schooner from Penzance. She hardly ever took away less than a thousand tubs at a time, and traded with Bristol.

Roscoff, or Rusco as it was called, is roughly one hundred miles from Cornwall, and is on the north coast of Brittany, being the nearest French port to the Cornish shore. It was a quaint, ramshackle little place, and appeared to be made up almost exclusively of old cellars, sheds and warehouses, that opened by large

doors into the narrow streets. These had other doors that opened on to the sea, so that at high tide the rowing-boats passed into the dark sheds, and emerged loaded for the various craft lying at anchor outside. The whole of the town was given over to the preparation of brandy for export to England. It arrived from the southerly provinces of France through one entrance of these underground warehouses in great puncheons, and came out of the other end by the thousand in four-gallon tubs ready slung for handling.

The merchants spent all their time entertaining the many waiting skippers and taking their money.

All the home news from Weymouth to the Land's End could be picked up here in a few minutes—news of the Government's latest subterfuges and tricks, news of the clashes with the enemy, of cargoes confiscated, broken heads, and news of the working of the gallows.

We were not long in lighting upon a Polperro skipper known to both, and we entrusted him to carry out the bargaining with Captain Zimon's only daughter, to whom on the Captain's death all his property had passed.

"The money is seventy pounds," said the same skipper on his return a week later, "and she won't 'bate a penny."

"Where is *The Goldfinch* lying?" I asked.

"In her old berth, just afloat at low water, and when we sailed there was the Government cutter that she had a fight with lying alongside."

"Moored to the same buoy?"

"Yes, that 's the only buoy there."

"How long will she wait for the money, skipper?"

"She promised to wait till I come back. She 's had an offer of sixty-five pounds from a party at Cawsand."

"When are yer sailing?"

"To-morrer night, if the breeze is fair. I 'm dropping my cargo off the Dodman. I can give yer a lift back, mates," he offered in a kindly way, as he guessed what was in our minds.

We decided to accept the invitation, and as we encountered a nasty chop, we were glad that we were able to be of some service in return.

The tubs were sunk just before dawn, and then to stall off all suspicion we put in half a day's trawling, and brazenly ran in with

dripping nets and a fair catch of fish. In case of there being any spies about, we filled up the bottom of the fish boxes with rubbish, and laid the catch out to best advantage on the top.

Jack and I never showed ourselves. We stayed in the cabin, and only came out singly when it was dark.

The cutter was still lying alongside *The Goldfinch*, pending no doubt full inquiry into the circumstances of her brush-up with Captain Zimon. There were some half a dozen men aboard the Government boat, and they were on the watch through their spyglasses all the time. Not a sail passed in or out of the harbour, or up and down the Channel within sight, but that they noticed it, and no doubt made a note of it.

As Jack was not known in the port, and I was, I left all to him. He satisfied himself that everything on board *The Goldfinch* was in good order, and as the Captain had left her, and the next evening he paid over the money and *The Goldfinch* was ours.

"Shall we wait till the Government boat sails, or shall we take *The Goldfinch* now?" asked Jack.

"Why, take her now, of course. We 've dished 'em before, Jack, and we can dish 'em again."

We got together some provisions, and, with our boots and hats, wrapped them into bundles with our clothes and any old rags which we could lay our hands on.

I then borrowed a rowing-boat, and placing the bundles in it, rowed out on the far side of the bay as softly as I could until I was well out of ear-shot. Turning at right angles, I pulled on until *The Goldfinch* was right in my track for home. Turning again, I rowed straight back, regardless of the noise which I made, and to which I added by singing a few staves as if I was lonesome, and glad to be getting in. I knew the cutter's men would hear me, but what of that? Better to be heard and suspected than to be detected trying to sneak in quietly. Besides, they would probably put me down for some ardent fisherman coming from the conger grounds, or inspecting a night-line. I shaped my course straight for the bow of *The Goldfinch* as if I hadn't noticed her in the dark, and as I sheared off, my left scull fouled her starboard beam. This stopped my way as I intended it

should, and while I was seemingly righting myself I pitched the bundles on to the deck. They were so soft that they fell with no audible sound. Two men shouted at me from the cutter lying the other side to look ahead more, and cursed me for being a lout. The light wasn't good enough to see their faces, however, so I grunted back some excuse, and in a couple of minutes was ashore.

We had now to wait for the tide to turn, and as soon as this set in with a good flow about one o'clock Jack and I took the water and swam out.

We guessed there would probably be one of the cutter's crew on the night watch, and we should have to risk on which beam he was making his quarters. He would certainly have settled himself down, and might even be asleep.

After all, we were the owners of the boat, and entitled to take her, but we didn't want either to be seen or have any questions asked us.

We just had on trousers and shirts, for the rest of our kit was already aboard. The tide had swung them round stern seawards, and as soon as we reached the buoy we silently unhitched the painter from the mooring ring,

and she commenced instantly, under the action of the current, to slowly drift away.

The only sound was just a slight squeaking of the fenders, thrown out to prevent the boats scraping one another, expanding as the pressure was taken off.

Hanging on the painter for perhaps a quarter of an hour, during which time she had drifted some two hundred yards, we clambered aboard.

Compasses are not much use to anybody in the dark, nor do they show how fast one is drifting. The little breeze should take us in a S.E. direction, and the tide was carrying us towards the S.W., so we concluded that we ought to be making somewhere south.

We had such an anxious wait for the light, however, and so many things to do that we had neither the opportunity nor the inclination to talk.

With the first streak of dawn we hoisted sail, and the breeze getting up, were well out of sight of the cutter's crew by the time the light enabled them to take any bearings.

"What 'll they do when they realise that *The Goldfinch* has been spirited away?" asked Jack, chuckling.

"When they have got over their surprise

they 'll hunt up the Cap'n's daughter to find out who she sold her boat to, you canstake your life."

"That won't take 'em far," I said. "I came from Devonport, and gave her an invented address there."

"We 've given them the slip properly, then," he put in.

We were romping ahead now due south, and found ourselves so busy overhauling the gear and sails that there wasn't a deal of room for further chat.

We decided to make Rusco, and we knew that with bad weather or adverse ~~wind~~ it would take the two of us all our time.

The Goldfinch required at least four hands to sail properly, and in hard weather six wasn't too many, for even a sailor-chap wants a rest now and then, to say nothing of a change and a morsel of food.

"Blest if she don't cut through it like a knife, and answers to the helm as easy as a wheel-barrer!" and Jack, pressing himself against the tiller, rolled up the bottom of his jersey and ran his eye along the deck in great admiration.

"She 's as fast as ever she was," I said, "and only half-rigged she 'd want some catching."

It was nearly daylight again before we had shallow enough water to drop anchor off Rusco, and being dog-tired, we were glad to turn in for a rest.

Next day, and before our identity had been discovered, we changed her name to *The Wild Rose*, and took her in nearer the harbour.

We then put all our money together, and found we had enough to lay out twenty pounds, with which we bought twenty-four tubs. The price was eighteen shillings a tub, but one pound was worth twenty-one shillings in France, and the merchant always allowed one tub to the score for "scorage." The duty was thirty-two shillings a gallon, so what was fetching two pounds a tub would cost the consumer in the ordinary way about six pounds, duty paid, to say nothing of the adulteration.

After we had laid in some food, and engaged a sailor-lad there for relief, we set sail for home, without having come to anything definite as to our future.

"I have a mind to try the mines," said Jack for the second or third time, "I can get up a good trade easy."

"I 'm agreeable," I said, "if we can only find some reliable party to work for us the other side."

"This lot ought to bring us in forty-eight pounds, perhaps fifty pounds, but, as you say, we want a salesman."

"I 'll be salesman; you bring the stuff over. We shall have nothing to fear that way."

"Where shall we work from?" asked Jack, "there 'pears to be difficulties."

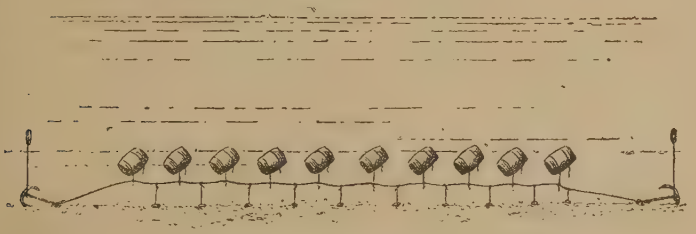
"You make your headquarters Penzance, and I 'll work from Porthleven."

"Go on," said Jack in a puzzled way.

"Porthleven is handy for Camborne, just a straight road of ten miles or so, and I can easily run over to Penzance every time you come in."

"Yes, but what about the goods?"

"Why can't I work some crab-pots at Porthleven, and you come over in the dark and sink the tubs on my ground? The miners, I 'll wager, will take all the shell-fish I can catch, and all the tubs I can pull up."



A crop sunk.

Jack, who was usually undemonstrative, danced a few steps of a jig like some light-hearted grasshopper. He then clapped me on the shoulder. "Wes, you 're a marvel!" was all he said, but I knew that our minds were at one, and that thereafter it would take a lot to break our partnership.

CHAPTER IX

DEVIL'S BAIT

We contrived to get off Porthleven at dawn, and having selected our ground, we sank the cargo, and put into the village.

Jack started for the mines without loss of time, and I set about getting some crab-pots and making myself agreeable, keeping a sharp look-out seaward lest some inquisitive fisherman should take it into his head to haul at our corks to find out what was at the other end.

My partner soon returned, having found the man he was in search of.

"He 's coming over to-morrer night, and hopes to clear the lot. The miners, though, have just had a holiday, and are a trifle short, so what he don't take away to-morrer he 'll come back for next day."

"Miners' money is good," I said, "whether it comes early or late, and some wholesome spirits for those who mostly live underground is beneficial."

"They 're a rough, desperate lot, though, and

we must be careful that they don't drag us into their disputes with Government men."

"No Government men will interfere with them a second time," I said, "so we must engineer it that they can't find out where the stuff comes from."

"I 'll wager we can keep our end up if they can keep up theirs," pursued Jack.

We were alive, however, to the risks in sinking goods on a rocky bottom, less the sharp-pointed rocks, by the action of the tide, cut the line, and this would necessitate on Jack's part careful soundings in future before he let go.

Our distributing agent, a man called Phillips, came over as promised in his trap, and a more pushing, business-like man I had never met. A thick-set customer, and a face covered completely with straggling black hair, he might easily have passed as a wild man of the woods. He had two carts waiting just outside the village, and as fast as we got in the tubs in a rowing-boat to the beach, so he conveyed them in his trap to the carts, covered them with sea-weed, and went away with the lot. It was all easy sailing from start to finish, and no suspicions of any kind were seemingly aroused.

So much was this the case that I remarked on it to Phillips.

"Our King's man," he replied, "is as good as gold, and he 's anxious to sample this as much as any one of 'em."

It looked as if we had struck a good patch, and when I said good-bye to Jack the next day I thought our prospects couldn't be rosier.

He took nearly all the money to pay for the next cargo, and set out for Penzance to get a crew, and to bring his wife and family along there from the Lizard.

I laid my pots in the shape of a big letter "W" or "H," and watched critically each morning for a bunch of floating corks outside my lines, which would tell me of Jack's second visit, and, what was more important, of the good things that would be found at the bottom.

I took lodgings overlooking the sea, and Phillips called again within a week for a further consignment. As nothing more had arrived, he had to be satisfied with my undersea larder of crabs and lobsters, for which he paid a good price.

Business went with a swing for some months,

and luck, as well as money, seemed to be coming our way at a big pace.

Jack was now bringing across one hundred tubs a fortnight, and we could have sold two hundred.

Phillips was a kind of a miner's "hold-all." In addition to being their wine merchant, he acted as their lawyer, doctor, and scribe, and in short attended to all their wants. He appeared always to be wearing his best Sunday clothes, which invested him, in spite of his rough appearance, with an air of marked respectability.

In reply to my questions, he told me that each of his mining customers gave him what he could spare from his wages every week, and when the amount reached twelve shillings and sixpence he became entitled to a gallon of brandy. So a very little calculation will show that our friend was making ten shillings a tub profit.

"There 's a new 'wentive man working this district now," he said one night later, as he turned up at the appointed meeting-place, which we varied as often as possible, "a chap by the name of Ockaday."

"I know him—Job Ockaday," I said. "The last time I met him he had just shot a woman."

"Did he, the dirty viper! I 'm glad you told me."

"They 've no doubt shifted him for that reason. You 'll have to go steady while he 's about."

"He 'll get a tap on the nut sure 'nuff, one of these days, if he isn't careful. The miners won't stand him allays hangin' about a-pokin' his nose everywhere. They very nearly had his hoss th' other day."

It may have been a couple of moons after this when he put the question—

"What do yer use to bait them crab-pots of your'n?"

"Sun-dried dog-fish, or sheep guts when I can get it," I replied.

"You like it to smell pretty powerful, I suppose?"

"The stronger the better for shell-fish; they follow scent like a dog."

"I 'll bring 'ee over something that 'll suit yer, then," he said, and I thought no more about it until in performance of his promise he arrived with some bait in a coarse sack. 'Twas strange-

looking and evil-smelling stuff; it almost knocked me down to come near it. My young mate, who did the baiting work, and who had handled some high game in his time, asked me if they had struck much of it up in the mines.

"I don't think they have, my lad. But why?"

"'Cause, maister, if you 'm a-going to use it regular I 'm off, I tell 'ee straight."

"We 'll try it this once, and if it isn't better than what we 're using, we 'll chuck it," I said, as I couldn't afford to break with the lad now—he knew too much.

Curiously enough, while that stuff was in the pots we had the biggest catch of our lives. We were taking two dozen lobsters and crabs a day, and even the boy lost his prejudice for it.

"This is wonderful bait, zur," he said, "don't the crabs fight for it!"

"I must get some more from Phillips, he 'll as likely as not be over to-night," I answered, glad to hear the lad was getting reconciled to it.

"So long as we do catch 'em like this I can put up with it."

"That 's good bait of yours," I remarked to Phillips, as he cleared me out again of the whole catch.

"Ah!" he replied with glee, "I thought 'twould be all right, maister."

"Do you find it in the mines?" I inquired.

"No," he went on whimsically, "that don't come from underground."

"What may it be, then?" I asked with some curiosity.

"Ah! that 's letting ye into a secret."

"Oh, very well," I said in an off-hand way.

"Well, I 'll tell 'ee, that 's a bit of Job Ockaday, and it 's about the only good he 's ever done 'ere."

"O God!" I exclaimed, "I wish I had never used it, we shall have no luck now. It 's—it 's the devil's bait!"

"Yes you will, you 'll have more luck, and so shall I."

When the full force of this terrible thing fell on me I was speechless with horror.

"Job was warned a time or two, but took no notice," went on Phillips, "then when he tried to take another man's property he found his mistake. You 'm welcome to a bit more of 'en if you want it! I 'm fine and glad to think that he 's more use dead than alive. If so be as you 'd prefer not to use 'en, well, no offence,

maister, and we 'll say no more about it to nobody."

Although not what might be called unreasonably superstitious, yet after Phillips had departed I had forebodings of approaching evil. I was apprehensive that our good luck would desert us, so a feeling of gloom settled down upon me. . . .

That night a southerly gale got up, and the seas rose to such a pitch that it was impossible to launch a boat. Although it was the season for such storms, this one came up suddenly and unexpectedly, and at daybreak a freighter bound for Fowey in ballast, being quite unable to tack against it, was blown in. When she realised that she was doomed, and saw that the beach appeared to offer a fair sporting chance of saving the crew's lives, she swung her helm hard over to port, and in a minute struck the shingle with such force that her main-mast snapped off at the deck like a carrot, and came crashing over with the sails until the head of the top-mast was within a foot or two of the water's edge. The stays were ripped out, and the running-gear parted as if made of so much thread. The wind in its wrath had converted the mast for a few

seconds into a perfect gangway for the men to reach the shore, which they were not slow to take advantage of. By the end of the day she had commenced to break up. The gale, veering from S. to S.W. and back again, continued with bigger fury, if possible, through the next night, and each tide brought seas of increased size. I was greatly alarmed for Jack. He was all right if he hadn't sailed, but as his time was already up I could hardly hope for this.

My lad and I had never taken our eyes off the sea all day, and he was just as depressed as I was.

"Do 'ee know, maister, that I 've had no luck sence we used that there bait?" he shouted between the gusts.

"Is it as bad as that?" I asked.

"Yas, the fust day I nearly cut me finger off; two days arter that me aunt died suddint; same week, you know, I fell into the water and catched a cold; now this comes along."

"We 'll clear what 's left of it out of the pots the first time we lift them," I said with determination.

"Now you 'em speakin' pretty," he said, "and may we have the chance to-morrer."

During the afternoon of the succeeding day we were just able to launch our boat. We never expected to find any strange clump of corks on our ground, as we knew that it was impossible for Jack to come in so near land with such a wind behind him to sink the tubs and get away again. That didn't even bear talking about.

"If we 've only lost half a dozen pots I shall be satisfied," put in the boy, as we pulled out to see what damage the storm had done to us.

"One thing," I said, "whatever we have lost they will be washed in, so we ought to find 'em again."

We found that ten had shifted more or less, and four were missing.

As we expected, the catch was very small, for the shell-fish, to escape the battering by a ground-sea, had gone into deeper water.

We got out the hateful bait, and substituted some clean yet putrid dog-fish.

Meanwhile, hoping against hope, we both silently kept an eye ever on the alert for signs of Jack's overdue visit, but to no purpose.

"The pot lines have probably shed their corks, or the pots have got jammed in the rocks

on the shore side," I said; "it 's no use looking for 'em till the water is clearer."

"That 's right, maister," responded the boy, "and we want dead low water, too, to do it properly."

As I intended leaving later for Penzance, I said—

"If Mr. Phillips is fool nough to come over to-night, tell him I 'm gone away, and it 's no use for him to come again till the night after to-morrow."

My inquiries for Jack at Penzance elicited the fact that his wife expected him home the night the storm broke out, and no tidings of him had come to hand.

This was poor comfort. Next day the wind had got back to the north, and coming home I turned it over in my mind that if he waited for the gale to blow itself out he couldn't be in for two days yet with this head breeze.

At low tide we put out to look for the missing pots.

"We shall find 'em if they 're about," said the boy, "the water 's as clear as gin."

"Did Phillips come over last night?" I asked.

"No, maister, but a man came in from Gunwalloe early this morning and said there were two or three wrecks down along."

"Whereabouts?"

"He didn't say where, he said they was all smugglin' craft, and the Customs men had collared 'em."

"Did he see them?" I asked hurriedly.

"He must a-seen one, for he said everything was washed overboard, she was full of water, and there was a man's head a-floating and bumpin' about in her."

"What was she?"

"He never said."

"Didn't you ask him, you thick-headed fool?"

"No, I never seed 'en. Jimmy Polgoose told me about it."

"I must see Jimmy when we get in."

"I 've told yer all he told me."

"Well, keep your eyes skinned over the port bow for those pots," I said, feeling about as happy as a dog tail-piped.

We detected a couple in no time. They had been washed inwards, and were wedged between the rocks, and we were able to salve them by the aid of the boat-hook.

We pulled over the ground slowly and methodically.

"Here, what 's this?" shouted the lad. "Oh, maister, go easy! There, it 's gone!"

"What was it, man?"

"I dunno—it fairly frightened me! No. don't turn her, back-paddle her steady."

I back-paddled slowly so as to retrace my line as near as possible. The lad's eyes were pointed at the water, and bulging from their sockets.

"There! Look! See it? . . . Quick! . . . Isn't it like a man's face?"

I stopped the boat, but I had seen enough to satisfy me that lying on the dark rocky bottom, roughly a fathom and a half down, was the body of a man. As soon as the ripple made by the sculls had subsided I looked again, and there, staring at us, wavering with the tremulous movement of the water, was his face. I just discerned his hair, a fair and curly mop, floating loosely about like the beard of a sea-anemone. Then I noticed the shape of the boyish face, and prepared myself for the worst.

We hooked the body up as gently as possible, and by much labour got it into the boat. He had no marks of violence about him, and the

sea-change had not altered his expression, which was as happy in death as it was in life.

I had no doubt but that my partner had fallen a victim of the storm. It seemed somehow fitting and in the nature of things that on this, Jack Cregan's last voyage, I should be with him and pilot him home.

I hastened over to Penzance to prepare his wife for the sad news, and the day following all that remained of him was taken there for interment.

CHAPTER X

THE MYSTERY OF MR. SIMPSON

My new concern was as to the fate of *The Wild Rose*, but I was not kept long in doubt.

I had heard several rumours of wrecks and floating tubs "down along," and was about to investigate them when my old landlady came in, and panting hard, said—

"There 's two King's men down on the beach talkin' to your lad Fred. I should go down if I was you. I shouldn't sit in here a-broodin'."

"Did you hear what they wanted?" I asked.

"No, but they 're all dressed up like dandies, and there 's fine capers with 'em and their hosses."

"Lend me your old man's razor, will yer?" I asked.

"Cert'inly; but whatever for?"

"I 'll show yer."

I was aware that the whole village was on my

side, come what might, and that no one would give me away. They all knew my business nearly as well as I. I generally kept on tap a spare tub specially for the residents, and to get a drop of brandy "for mother, who 's got the bile summin' awful," or "for old Mary's cold," or "for granfer's tea," was much appreciated, and never went unrewarded.

In a few minutes I had shaved off my beard, and got into some ragged sea-stained clothes. I put on an old slouch hat, and borrowing an ancient and substantial stick, sallied forth like a man with a gammy leg.

My motto was always to face the enemy openly rather than to play a lurking game when danger threatened.

The visitors consisted of an inspector and a trooper. They were both looking seaward, and talking to one or two boys. As I neared them the inspector turned round. What a surprise ! I had seen him before. Great snakes ! it was old Ginger—freckled face and wall-eye complete. Evidently he 'd been transferred farther west like Ockaday.

I was glad I had taken the trouble to disguise myself.

I hobbled up and eyed them and their horses with assumed admiration.

The chief cast his eyes over me, then said—

"Hullo! I seem to have seen you afore, somewhere."

"That 's more 'n likely," I replied.

"How long have you been here?"

"Matter of a few years."

As he couldn't make much headway, he dashed right in to one of the objects of his visit.

"Who is it that had all these tubs that were washed in here?" he went on in curt tones.

This was evidently a try-on. I said—

"I dunno."

"Where did he take 'em, as we want 'em?" was the next question.

"That I can't tell 'ee," I replied.

"Do you know how many there were?"

"No, I don't."

"How many did you see?"

"I didn't see any," I said, "I wish I did."

"How many came out of her?" asked the other man, pointing to the wrecked freighter.

"I saw her come in, and there was none on her then."

"What was her cargo?"

"Sand ballast, but not enough to stand up against the wind. If she 'd had a couple of thousand tubs in her she wouldn't have come in at all."

"What do yer mean?" they asked together.

"I mean that her keel wasn't low enough in the water, and instead of sailing she drifted afore the wind."

"Do you know a boat around here called *The Wild Rose?*"

"*Wild Rose? Wild Rose?*" I repeated innocently. "I know a boat called *The Moss Rose.* She belonged to Falmouth. Do you mean the boat that 's wrecked down here at Gunwalloe?"

It occurred to me that I might as well get some information.

"Yes," the chief said, "we want to find out something about her. Do you know how many tubs they picked up out of her?"

"No, I heard you chaps had the lot."

I thought I would draw a bow at a venture.

"We don't think we did," was the gruff reply.

"Have yer seen any crab-pots washed up down there? I 've lost a pretty lot."

"No, but there 's a man's head down there if you want one," replied the younger man jocularly.

"You wouldn't let that stay there if there was any prize-money to it like there is to a tub." I felt compelled to have a dig at him.

The chief now changed the subject again.

"Have you seen our officer here lately that went by the name of Ockaday?"

"No, have yer lost 'en?"

"He 's been missing now for a fortnight, and we want to trace him up."

"Where was he quartered?" I asked.

"Falmouth. Did you ever see him here?"

"No, I 've been here for some years crabbing, and he 's never been around in my time."

"Have yer got any fish?"

"Yes, I can let you have half a dozen if you want some."

After they had consulted together, they gave me an order, and I sent Fred out to the larder-pot to fetch them.

No sooner had we tied the fish up and the men had paid for them, than who should come along but Phillips.

He took in the situation at a glance.

"Any fish to-day, maister?" he shouted at me from the top of the beach.

"No, weather 's been too rough."

I thought this would give him a chance to get away his carts, which I knew would be waiting outside the village. I was right, for Phillips took the hint and made himself scarce in about as much time as a lobster takes to flap his tail.

After further talk the men departed. I questioned Fred as to what the conversation was about before I put in an appearance, but ascertained that it was all on the lines of that which had taken place with me.

"I gave 'em, maister," he added with a grin, "all the fish which we caught with that there bait. I was glad to get rid of 'em."

"That 's right—most suitable for them," I replied.

I had now learnt one or two important bits of news: that the poor old *Wild Rose* had been driven ashore and wrecked at Gunwalloe, and that one of the crew had had his head cut off by the falling masts or stays, and that up to recently it was still floating about in her hull; that the Customs men had confiscated what

remained of the boat, and collared the tubs found in her or washed ashore; and that the disappearance of Ockaday was causing them some uneasiness. I had to shape my course accordingly.

A day or so later the whole countryside was plastered with notices, which read as follows :—

NOTICE.

A reward of Fifty Pounds is offered for information which will lead to the discovery, dead or alive, of Job Ockaday, an officer belonging to His Majesty's Customs at Falmouth, who mysteriously disappeared with his arms and horse when on duty on the night of the 2nd instant. All information bearing on the officer's movements on the date specified should be at once communicated to the nearest Custom House.

GOD SAVE THE KING.

This was followed by a hue and cry all over the place for the missing man. Officers by the dozen in plain clothes were drafted into the district to clear up the mystery. Houses were

searched on the flimsiest evidence and slightest pretext. While all this investigation was taking place I laid low, and had the opportunity of noting a sensational episode.

Standing in its own grounds on the edge of the village was a secluded house called "Rosebank," occupied by a Mr. Simpson. He had not resided there long, and in consequence of his solitary and retiring habits I put him down to start with for a spy.

"If you are going out to lift your pots to-morrow, Mr. Hawken, and will only take a short time, I should like to go with you," he said to me on several occasions, but I wasn't having any.

"I may be gone the best part of the day, sir," I would reply.

"Oh, well, any other day will do just as well, and you might let me have some fish to-night if you can spare them."

He was a small-sized man about fifty, with a back not much bigger than a pilchard's. He had little patches of straggling yellow hair on his face and eyes the colour of a throstle's egg, and no matter how long he was out daily on the cliffs in the sun it had no effect on his skin. He

never looked anything else but pale and delicate.

So after a bit I changed my opinion about him, and regarded him as a man who had a bit of trouble on his mind.

"You come from up the country, I suppose, sir?" I said to him once.

"Yes, yes. I was advised to come down here for my wife's health."

This was the first time I heard he had a wife.

"I hope you both will benefit by it," I went on. "I thought perhaps you were connected with the Customs."

"Oh, no, I've retired from business. But tell me what would a Customs officer do here?"

He spoke so innocently that it was as clear as daylight he knew nothing whatever about "the trade."

Not long after the Notice appeared a uniformed officer and his assistant drew up in a trap a little distance from the house, and dismounting, took the bearings of the place and its surroundings.

Then they entered the garden gate, and inquired at the house if Mr. Simpson was at home.

"No, he 's not in at the moment," replied the brawny female, much above the ordinary servant class, who opened the door.

"We are Customs officers, and we have a search warrant to go over the house for smuggled goods."

"Oh, I don't understand you; but will you please wait for Mr. Simpson," said the woman with evident concern.

"We can get on without him. Don't you worry."

The servant stood in their way, and appealed again to them to await Mr. Simpson's return.

This only made the men all the more eager to commence operations, and pushing her aside, they entered the house.

In the dining-room they were met by a tall, handsome woman, who rose to welcome them with a smile of recognition.

"Why, George and Harry, my dear brothers," she exclaimed, "what brings you here?" and she proceeded to embrace the astonished men.

"Oh, George!" she said as she locked her arms in a vice-like grip round the chief's neck, "and you have been away from me so long."

She kissed him with much emotion.

Then came Harry's turn. He tried to dodge her pressing attentions, but was unable.

She chased him across the room, and when she caught him she heaped similar endearments on him.

The men exchanged winks, and assisted each other in warding her off. They had no doubt but that she was playing with them to gain time for hiding the goods.

As they continued the search from room to room she followed them, and plied them with all sorts of domestic questions. She looked upon the whole performance as a joke, and laughed heartily at their doings. They found nothing of a contraband character, or even at all suspicious.

When they tried to leave she wouldn't hear of them going. As they used force so did she. In this way she struggled with them until thoroughly worn out, and as she sank to the floor venting her disappointment in a frenzy of tears they scuttled away, feeling there was a mistake somewhere.

" That 's a rum go ! " said the chief, glancing behind him to make sure that she was not

following, "she 's torn my tunic all up the back."

"Look how she 's scratched my face," responded the other, mopping up the blood which ran down it.

"Here comes Mr. Simpson, I suppose!"

The quiet, inoffensive man quickened his pace up the drive when he saw them.

"Do you want any business with me?" he asked.

"We 've just been through your house on a search warrant, sir, for smuggled goods."

"What nonsense! How could I possibly be suspected?"

"It was reported that a couple of tubs were seen from the road in your garden."

"Tubs?"

"Yes, sir, brandy tubs—they are down there by the gate."

"Do you mean those barrel-shaped flower-pots?"

"Yes, sir."

"They were lying about in the garden when we came, and we used them for geraniums. Was my wife much distressed?"

"She acted very strange, sir."

"Why, man, she 's mentally afflicted," said Mr. Simpson with a tremor in his voice.

"Very sorry, we had to do our duty."

The lady could now be heard shouting from an open window to her brothers to return, so the officers saluted and hurried away.

CHAPTER XI

SUSAN

Six months after the events narrated in the last chapter I was on the job again with a boat of my own. After squaring up accounts with poor Jack's widow, I had a matter of two hundred and fifty pounds spare money, and I bought a little craft up at Cawsand (where they knew how to build them in those days) and named her *The Dove*. She was about twenty tons, dandy-rigged, painted black, with tanned sails. My only two enemies being quartered down in the west, I thought I might venture to do a little business from my old home at Mevagissey, so I took her there. Along the coast-line I was now pretty well known, and felt certain that as soon as the first inquiry came in from the country for contraband I should hear of it. I was in no hurry. Pilchard and herring, according to season, could be caught outside literally by the ton, and I could always make a decent living by hauling for them. Besides which, I didn't want to take more risks than I could help.

Squire Botallack had been referred to me, and one day paid me a call.

"I 'm putting up, Cap'n Hawken," he said, "as you know for Parliament for Grampound in about a month's time, and I must get in some refreshment for the voters."

I said—

"Of course you must, sir, or you 'll be defeated."

"My opponent, I hear, is going to run the election on beer, and I think the voters would prefer a drop of good French brandy."

"Not a doubt about it, sir."

"Well, I hear, Cap'n, that you 're a likely man to carry out a run for us."

I said, "Yes, sir, very pleased on the usual terms." I thought that I could now afford to follow the big men at the game.

"What are they?"

"One pound a tub down, the other pound a tub to be put up in a bank for me to draw when you have got the goods."

"How do you propose to land them, Cap'n?"

"I sink 'em where you like, and you must arrange to get them in."

"Where do you suggest?"

"There are plenty of places, the question is which is most suitable for you and your friends."

"What about Gorran, Cap'n?"

"Couldn't be better. The crabbers there know every move in the game."

"You would help me arrange it, I suppose?"

"Certainly, when you are ready we will go over there together."

Within a week he had paid over seventy-five pounds for seventy-five tubs, and deposited another seventy-five pounds in the bank, and I met him at Gorran to arrange the salving operations.

A friend had previously told me that the best party for the business was a fishwoman there named Susan. No one knew her other name, and plenty said she had none, so to Susan we went. I never saw a woman more like a man. She stood nearly six feet, was as upright as a crab-hook, and had shoulders like a bull walrus. The skin on her face and brawny arms was deeply tanned, and as rough as the outside of a pitcher. We found her down at the haven.

"Which is your boat, Susan?" I asked, because it was all important that she should have one of her own.

"The big blue wan down there. What 'ee want 'en fer?"

"Can yer lift some tubs for us?"

"What, to-night?"

"No, in about a week."

"Yis, as many as yer like. I 'd charge one shilling a tub, or sixpence if you 'll give me wan."

The Squire thought this was very reasonable, and agreed.

"Where shall you put 'em?" he asked.

"Oh, I knaw where to put 'em, never fear. How many is there?"

"Seventy-five."

"Well, you must give me two days to get 'em up to Gorran in the dunkey-cart. My Neddy won't take up more 'n four or five to a time, and don't-ee sink 'em too far out."

"You look out for 'em after next Saturday," I put in.

"All right, and mind yer paint yer corks white. I don't want to be lifting other people's crab-pots all day."

"You get them in as soon as you can, and I 'll send some carts over for them," said the Squire.

"Who is it a-talking? 'Tisn't Squire Botallack is it?"

"Yes, Susan."

"I thought me eyes didn't decieve me," responded Susan, who appeared to be highly flattered.

"I 'm putting up here for Grampound, and I thought something like this would be very nice for the voters."

"Yes, to be sure it would, do 'em a power o' good. Nothin' better neither to be had nowhere."

"Of course, you 'll say nothing about it, Susan."

"Not likelies. As I said to old Parson Gurney a fortnight ago when he come down for a tub, 'What 's locked in my bosum, Parson,' I says, 'is locked there with a bar of solid iron.' And I only hopes when you get into Parliament, Squire, you 'll put a stop to these here duties what 's killing the trade."

"I shall certainly try, Susan."

"Who 's standin' aginst yer, Squire, if I may be so bold to ask such a thing?"

"Mr. Carne, the brewer."

"Ah! his beer isn't goin' to take him far. I

wouldn't wash out me boat wi' it, teetotaller for all that though I be," and Susan crossed her great muscular arms over her breast defiantly, and shook her close-cropped head.

We then bid her good-bye, and mounted the Squire's pair-horse wagonette standing by with coachman and footman in full livery.

As we drew away Susan's voice rang out again—

"I wish 'ee luck, Squire, wi' all me heart!"

The run was entirely satisfactory. The Squire cleared the cargo without a hitch, and presented Susan with five pounds and a tub for her trouble.

He was returned to Parliament with flying colours.

He stocked the polling booth with brandy, which was decanted in jars, and on voting for him every voter and his friends and relatives, unto the third and fourth generation, had as much as they could drink. The other man's beer went unappreciated and scarcely touched.

After the election the Squire gave a big dinner to his supporters, to which I was invited, and there picked up another order for one hundred tubs.

The introduction to Susan proved to be a valuable one for all parties, and her services were utilised in this way many times afterwards.

She managed matters so astutely that I often insisted in future runs that my customers should use that spot.

It lay handy to Mevagissey, and on getting in I would walk over to Gorran of a morning to acquaint her of my arrival, and where the crop would be picked up.

The Customs men were lurking about still as active as ever, and I knew that besides being suspected my movements were watched, and no doubt noted. Yet until they had some evidence to go on I was as safe as the King himself.

I always paid my crew well, and they were never happier than when engaged on a trip across.

One day I had heard of a Customs man prowling about the coast-line more energetically than usual, and I went over to Gorran with the object of warning Susan, who I suspected would be busy on a crop which I had recently brought in.

I arrived, however, just too late. As I got

down to the sea I was only in time to observe him clamber down the cliffs to meet Susan, who was rowing ashore. He had no doubt been watching her from the cliff-top, and timed his appearance accordingly.

Had I studied my own interests I should have skedaddled before I was seen, but it wasn't my nature to run away from a danger of this sort. I had seen too much of it, and one never knew, I might be of use ; so I hung about with another fisherman or two, spectators of the proceedings.

Susan was pulling at the sculls with powerful great strokes, singing in rhythm with the splashes she was making. The boat, right down at the stern with the weight of half a score of dripping tubs (all covered with seaweed), threw out quite a ripple from the bows as she urged it along. Oblivious of any danger, she struck the sand, shipped her sculls, and prepared to step ashore, before she caught sight of the visitor.

" Hullo, my son," she said quietly, " what do 'ee want ? "

" What have you got under that seaweed ? "

" Do 'ee want to knaw ? "

" Yes, I do."

"Then 'want' will be your master," and saying which she tried to push off again.

Realising that this wouldn't suit him he jumped into the boat. Not being a sea-faring man, he landed a bit clumsily.

"Git out o' here, sonny!" exclaimed Susan, swinging her right arm with a force that would have been dangerous to an ox. The palm of her hand landed on his neck, just below the ear, and toppled him over head-foremost into the water.

Unfortunately, the boat being half afloat was see-sawing on the keel, and in righting itself tilted over so much the other way that poor Susan lost her balance and fell out the opposite side.

They rose together, wet through, and met again at the nose of the boat. He laid his hand on the bow, more to steady himself from the effects of the blow than anything else, and eyed his opponent up and down suspiciously.

"Here, my son, your helmet 's going to sea," she said playfully, pointing to the drifting head-gear.

"What have you got in the boat?" he demanded again, straightening himself.

"What odds is that to you?" she replied sternly, her eyes now flashing in anger.

He waded out towards the stern, but Susan was on him before he could satisfy his curiosity. She gripped him from behind by the collar of his tunic, quickly swung round, and arching her back, before he knew what had happened—although considerably above the average size man—he was sailing over her head for another cold plunge.

"That 's what they call the flying-mare, my lil' dear," she said, as he rose spluttering and shaking his head to free himself of sand and salt water. "I 'll show yer a prettier fall directly."

As soon as we finished laughing at his antics, one of the fishermen standing by said—

"There 's not a man around here will wrastle her; she 'll put every wan of 'em on their back."

"Yas," chimed in another, "you see, his legs being under water were no good to 'en, so long as she could heave 'en he had to go."

In his bewilderment the officer instinctively reached for his pistol.

"You 'd better take that home to my place and put it by the fire, sonny," and Susan smiled

hard at him. Then turning her face in our direction shouted, "Have yer got any dry powder? He wants to try a bit of shooting now."

This was the last straw. Abashed and ashamed, he came ashore and staggered towards us, his boots crunching with water.

It was clear he 'd had enough. To make his humiliation complete, Susan retrieved his helmet, the plume of which was all limp and bedraggled by the wetting, and flung it up the beach after him. He picked it up like a man with a broken heart, and tried to restore its grandeur before weakly replacing it on his head.

Quite a while elapsed before he spoke. One could notice that a conflict of emotions was taking place inside him.

"What plant is this?" he asked feebly.

"Plant?"

"Yes, are you chaps all in it?"

We said no.

"I 'll wager somebody will have to suffer for it."

He was threatening now. We made no reply.

Then he changed his tone again.

" Play fair ! Who is that man ? "

We didn't know what he was talking about, so could say nothing.

" If you 'll be straight and tell me who that man is down there, I 'll—well, I 'll say no more about it."

" That 's a bargain," I said. " Come up to the village and dry your clothes, and we 'll settle everything there."

We first rigged him up in borrowed things, and after we had got a glass of hot grog down him, it took very nearly half an hour before we could satisfy him that it was a woman he 'd been up against—not a man—and he was never known to speak of it again.

CHAPTER XII

A MARKED MAN

THE Service had now made a useful discovery, and no doubt one which would clear up what was till then regarded as a big leakage of contraband. This would also throw a light on my midnight sailings and arrivals, and I should for the future have to regard myself as a marked man. Still, I wasn't the only one by a long way whose name would now figure in the Government black book, and whose movements henceforth would be steadily reported to headquarters. It had to come, and I felt quite indifferent whether it came sooner or later.

I knew that my old enemy Ginger would remain for ever unpacified until he had me in the Navy, or, better still, clapped body and soul into jail. I could be certain that whenever his services were called in he would identify me, and would probably worm out more details of my past than I cared should be disclosed to the official world.

That he failed to clear up the Ockaday mystery (according to the reports on the other side of the Channel) didn't seem to affect his position or reputation, for he was now a bigger pot than ever. His job seemed to be a roving one. I heard of him putting in sudden appearances all up and down the coast—the bearer of a fresh supply of fire-arms and ammunition one day, and of the latest Government regulations the next. The Service was completely out of sympathy with the inhabitants, and although these visits were mostly nocturnal and carried out with the greatest secrecy, yet reports of them always leaked out, and were conveyed to us by eager and willing tongues.

When Ginger included Mevagissey in his rounds it was amusing to hear him try and pick up some information from the quay loungers, almost the only folk who would condescend to talk at all to him.

"How long has Cap'n Hawken had *The Dove*, my boy?" was one question I overheard.

"I dunno, but there is the Cap'n. He 'll tell 'ee."

Ginger was unconsciously within a few feet of me. He passed erect and rigid, looked almost

in my eyes with an expression full of hate, then turned away.

To an old friend of mine he put the query: "Wasn't Cap'n Hawken once the boy on *The Happy Fanny?*" but he didn't get any coherent reply.

As luck would have it, all this time orders, and in some cases venture money, for goods were pouring in both from my old customers and new introductions, but I could do nothing until I found another suitable landing-place, and a friend ashore who could be relied upon to complete the business there.

Mr. Callaway the magistrate, out St. Columb way, whom I had met when with Parson Bennetts, badly wanted me to undertake a run for him and his friends. Although anxious to oblige, I had to point out to him the difficulties to be got over.

As it was somewhat dangerous, in consequence of the way in which my movements were watched, to discuss matters at Mevagissey, I spent a night with him at his house on the north coast.

"You bring them in, Cap'n," he said, "one night at St. Columb Porth, and I 'll arrange everything."

"I can't come in too near land," I replied, "and for the north coast I must have fair weather."

"I don't want you to. One of my men here, Joe, has been at this business before, and says he can do everything that 's wanted."

I said—

"I 'd like to be allowed to see him to find out if he really understands the work, and is something more than a tub carrier."

"You 'll find him a very respectable man."

So Joe Tregaskis was brought along. He was a man of middle age, with a weak, light blue eye, well set up, and equal to any job which the landing of goods would entail.

"You know something about this business, Joe?" I commenced.

"Yes, I 've taken a hand at it a few times, Cap'n."

"Where have you worked?"

"Up and down the coast on and off, zur."

"What made you give it up, Joe?"

"We had a teetotal minister at our chapel," explained Joe, "and he told me if I didn't give it up I wasn't to carry on no more worship there."

"How did he know about it?" I asked.

"He got wet through coming over one night here to preach, and I gave 'en a little drop of best French afore he started."

"Did he drink it?"

"Yes, Cap'n, and sent over for some more just to keep the ague out of 'en."

"Then he told you to give it up?"

"Yes, and I took to butlerin' and coachman to Mr. Callaway."

"You don't mind going back to it, Joe?"

"No, not now the minister's dead."

"You can get a boat down at the Porth to land the goods?"

"I can do that easy, zur."

"Got anybody to help you?"

"Yes, two of my chapel mates living there 'll do that."

"Well, you tell them to look out for me just before sun-down, if the weather's fair, in about a fortnight. I'm dandy-rigged, with tanned sails. I shan't come in till nigh on high water."

The run, as things turned out, was quite successful. Tregaskis and his mates landed the contraband without mishap of any sort, and the stuff was all got away that night, and indeed as soon as it touched shore. Mr. Callaway superintended operations, and gave me a pressing invitation to spend the remainder of the night at his house; so I brought in *The Dove* to the quay, and leaving the crew on board, accompanied him on his six-mile drive home.

Next morning at breakfast Mr. Callaway said—

"You are in no hurry to get back for an hour or two, Cap'n?"

I said—

"No, sir, my time is yours while I 'm here."

"Well," pursued my host, "I am taking over some of those tubs this morning to Mr. Bishop, a brother magistrate of mine not far from here, and I should like you to accompany me."

"Nothing will give me greater pleasure, sir," I was about to reply, when Joe entered abruptly, his eyes twitching and his lips pursed.

"There 's two officers, zur, at the door called to see you."

"What, constables?"

"No, zur, Customs officers."

We all three exchanged glances as each tried to fathom the object of the visit.

"What in the devil do they want?"

"They didn't tell me, zur, no more 'n they wanted to see you."

"Show them into the library, then."

"What do you think of it, Cap'n?" he asked.

"It 's connected with the run last night for certain."

Mr. Callaway frowned slightly in meditation, and after giving himself a minute or so to collect his thoughts, he set forth to meet the enemy.

"Stay here till I return, Cap'n," he said quietly as he closed the door behind him.

Five minutes later he was back again.

"You are quite right, their visit is in connection with last night. They want me to sign a search warrant for Farmer Rice's house."

"Farmer Rice!" I exclaimed. "Yes, of course, he took away a dozen tubs. How did they hear of it?"

"They didn't say, nor do they appear to know for certain where the run actually took place."

"That 's good!"

"They require another magistrate's signature to the warrant, and I have offered to take them over with me to Mr. Bishop."

"It 's pretty clear you won't want me, then."

"No, I 'm sorry, some other time. Besides, I thought perhaps you would feel safer on board the boat."

By this time my host was in his hat and coat, and the dog-cart was at the door.

"Aye, aye, sir," I said, "although I 'm sorry we must part. What about warning Rice?"

"I leave that to you and Joe."

Peeping through the curtains of the open

window overlooking the drive, I saw Mr. Callaway mount the smart-looking four-wheeled dog-cart. The two men then approached, and I involuntarily stared back in anxiety, for a look of the direst horror had come over Joe's features as he stood at the horse's head.

"Will you get up, gentlemen?" said the host politely.

The elder one came forward and climbed up by his side, but the other man delayed taking his seat.

"Ah, you have not let down the foot-board, Joe," said Mr. Callaway, as glancing round he saw what the delay was about.

"The darned thing won't open, zur, it 's got jammed."

"Jammed? What do you mean, man? How can it get jammed?"

The waiting officer then commenced to examine it, anxious no doubt to be of some assistance if possible.

Joe's face was now a study in expressions. He was watching the men with one eye and his master with the other, and every time he thought he caught the latter's eye he was winking like an owl in the sun."

"Where 's the key?" Mr. Callaway was fast losing patience.

"The key 's br-br-broke, zur," stammered Joe, who looked about as happy as a gurnet in a tub of bran.

"Who broke it?" demanded Mr. Callaway.

"I did, zur," replied Joe, getting in a series of desperate winks that would have been visible in the dark, "trying to open it, zur."

"All right," said Mr. Callaway in a changed tone of voice. "Jump up in front, my man, we must manage to squeeze in three."

He spoke only just in time, as the officer, after fumbling in his pockets, had produced an implement that appeared very likely to do the trick.

They fitted themselves in and drove off.

I then joined Joe, whose face was now beaded with perspiration, and his limbs all of a shake.

"That was a narrer shave, Cap'n," he said with unspeakable relief. "Maister never told me he was takin' them along with him, and I put the tubs in the boot for Mr. Bishop."

"Your master guessed what was the matter, I suppose, Joe?"

"I tried to make him, but if I didn't he couldn't have gone far afore he understood."

"How is that?"

"Why, he 'd hear 'em inside a-rattling and a-bumping together afore he left the drive."

"Now we must get on to Farmer Rice, Joe, as quickly as possible."

"What 's the matter with *him*, Cap'n?"

"They will be searching his place for smuggled goods inside a couple of hours."

"Well, we 'll drive over in the gingle."

"I think I 'd like to cover up my sea-faring clothes, Joe. Can you lend me an old coat and another hat? You never know what we may be up against."

"I 'll lend yer something, Cap'n, belonging to the maister."

When I had donned one of Mr. Callaway's well-worn broad-cloth surtouts, and substituted an old beaver for my own cap, Joe said he had never in his life seen a better disguise for a cattle-dealer.

Rice was a large and wealthy farmer living some four miles away, and was a near neighbour of Parson Bennetts. I recalled the assistance he rendered us once with his celebrated

hunter Beeswing. We had to save him at all costs.

Mr. Callaway I knew could be relied upon to delay matters as long as possible, so as to give us ample time to convey the necessary warning.

On the drive over Joe, always inclined to nerves, became painfully alarmed.

"I firmly believe, Cap'n, that the minister what 's dead was a good man," he said.

"The one that had two go's of brandy, Joe, to keep the ague away?"

"Yes, Cap'n, his sermon that night was full of fire and 'magination."

"It didn't hurt him, then, Joe?"

"No, not a bit. 'Fie upon thee, Joe Tregaskis, and all thy smuggling ways,' he said to me arterwards, 'and defile not this chapel again by poking yer nose inside the door till you 've give it up.' Then I promised 'en, and a Tregaskis—that is the real stock—never breaks word."

His hands, cold and trembling, played with the reins.

"Do you think these men are walking, Joe?" I asked, changing the subject.

"No, I think they came across country to

Mr. Callaway's to save time, and will have the Customs trap waiting for them at Mr. Bishop's."

"Easy, Joe! Pull up here sharp under these trees. What 's that in the road on top of the hill yonder?"

"That looks like a man dressed in black."

"Do you notice anything about him?"

"He 'pears to be loiterin'."

"That 's not far from the road leading into Mr. Rice's farm, if I remember," I said.

"You 're quite right, Cap'n."

"I 'll lay odds he 's a private clothes man on the watch until the other men join him."

"He 's gone!" exclaimed Joe, turning the colour of cigar ash.

"No, he 's still there standing in the shade of that thick bush."

"We 'd best go back, Cap'n."

"No we don't, Joe, he can't see us, but we will show ourselves directly."

"We shall all be dragged in it, Cap'n! Cap'n!"

"Turn the cob round and drive through that gate on your right."

I opened the gate. We then unharnessed the cob, turned him loose, and ran the gingle in by

the side of the hedge under the shelter of and well screened by the trees.

" Now, Joe," I said, " we have no time to lose. Pull yourself together. Two fields back there is a flock of sheep. We 'll round them up, and with you in front and me behind we 'll drive them into Farmer Rice's."

A gleam of delight came into Joe's eyes for a minute, then went again.

" Ah, Cap'n, he 'll notice we 've got no sheep-dog ! "

" No, such a thing will never occur to a lubber like that."

Ten minutes later, carrying a drover's staff apiece, we were on the road again with a hundred borrowed sheep between us. As we approached the figure on the hill, he appeared to get suddenly busy whittling a holly stick. Joe respectfully touched his hat, but I was too much engaged in whipping up the laggards of the flock to notice him.

One glance, however, was sufficient to satisfy me that he was the advance agent of the Customs officers.

A few yards farther on was the private road which led into Farmer Rice's farm.

Having turned the corner, I sent Joe ahead as hard as he could go to break the news. I estimated that we had about an hour in hand unless the men were driving, when—well, they might turn up at any minute.

Hark! Surely—yes—I couldn't be mistaken, I heard the foot-beats of a horse and the grinding noise of wheels on the parish road which we had just left, and immediately afterwards a trap turned the corner at a smart trot.

It was a two-wheeled dog-cart, with two full-uniformed men in front and our waiting friend perched up behind.

"Go steady!" I sung out. "Don't you injure my sheep."

It was only a narrow lane, and the animals blocked it so completely that the horse had to proceed at a walking pace.

"We shan't hurt yer sheep," said the driver, trying to pick a way through the flock.

"No, but you may drive them off the road on to Mr. Rice's crops," and I bunched them all up together again.

It was roughly half a mile from the farm, and Joe ought to be there by this time Then it struck me, suppose they ran against Joe! They

would be sure to recognise him. Would he have the sense to keep out of the way ?

Farmer Rice had collected a dozen tubs last night, so I reckoned it out that six were probably for friends who would be sure to have claimed them before this, and he 'd have about five minutes to get away the balance.

" Nice day," I said pleasantly, and if possible to prevent time dragging too heavily on their hands.

" Yes," was the response.

" We don't see you gentry about here often," I went on.

" Don't yer ? "

" I 've got a brother in your service up-along."

" Have yer ? "

" Yes, he 's doing well, too Look out ! that ewe 's a little lame, don't 'ee let the mare tread on her. Whoa, mare ! "

" She won't tread on her," said the driver impatiently.

" Did you ever find out what became of your man Ockaday down Falmouth way ? " I asked in a kind way.

" No, never. Did you know him ? "

" Not much, but my brother knew him, said

he was a capital chap. Don't drive 'em so fast!"

"Where was Ockaday then?"

"Mevagissey district. You keep the sheep back, and I 'll open the farm-gate for yer."

I struggled with the catch of that gate for three minutes or more, until tired of waiting the man behind jumped out to help me.

As soon as they had got through the gateway the officers leapt from their seats in a twinkling, and leaving the plain-clothes man to look after the trap, pushed past me, and presented themselves at the front door of the house.

No sooner had they entered than Joe hove in view from around a corner of the building.

"They are here, Joe—don't show yourself—bolt—wait for me at the gingle," was all I had time to say.

I hung about for a bit, but there was so much uproar and chaos in the Rice household that, leaving the sheep to wander at their will, I was glad to make myself scarce and strike out for our rendezvous.

"Did you get the tubs away all right, Joe?" I asked when I rejoined him.

"Yes, just in time. We took 'em out in

the pump-house and dropped 'em down the well."

"How did the Customs men hear about it?"

"One tub was leaking, and Mr. Rice thinks that the patrol man must have smelt it, and saying nothing, followed the cart."

"Ah, of course they wanted the person who paid for them; they didn't want a farm-hand with a cart."

"You 're quite right, Cap'n, but I don't think they will get any reward for their trouble this time."

CHAPTER XIII

JOE'S DREAM

I saw Joe again on the next run, some two months later. He was still a victim of nerves, and in driving me back from the Porth to Mr. Callaway's as on the previous occasion it was plain to see from his conversation that the work was really anything but congenial to him, and that his conscience was not at rest.

"Did the Customs men find Mr. Rice's tubs, Joe?" I asked.

"No, Cap'n, and although they spent the day there searching for 'em, they never as much as found the hoop of a cask."

"Did you hear if they were upset about it?"

"Upset? You used the right word, Cap'n. As they didn't leave till dark, some of Farmer Rice's men tipped a boulder or two out in the lane. These threw down the horse, broke the shafts, and the men were all flung out in the

ditch. They were too much ashamed to come back and complain, and in the morning you could see where their heads had pitched and their fingers had gone into the soft bank. Upset! It 'll be a long time afore they trouble Mr. Rice again."

"You got home all right, Joe, after leaving me at the Porth?"

"Yes, and 'nation glad to get there, for mind I felt disturbed, kind of onsettled, and I had a nasty dream, Cap'n, that night."

"What was it about?"

"'Twas a strange dream and no mistake, and I made up my mind that I wouldn't say nothing about it except to you."

"Tell me, then, Joe."

"Well, Cap'n, I dreamt that I was in heaven, and as I looked around me the sea was full of sailing craft of all rigs—and some of 'em schooners—bringing in nothing but tubs. They was coming ashore by hundreds and scores, and anybody could have as many as they liked for the fetching of 'em."

"Did you have any, Joe?"

"Yes, I borrered a barrer and wheeled away all I could shove. You didn't know old Lobb

the blacksmith, I suppose, Cap'n, no ? He was a big chap and a tremenjous drinker. Ah ! he 'd be afore your time. Well, he was there. He 'd collected a great stack of tubs as big as a barn, and was walking around 'em, his face a-shining. I 'll tell 'ee another man who was up there. Old Jimmy Kay, the colt-breaker—spurs and whip all on—you know, he as was coming home one night with a couple of tubs tied around his neck, when he fell into a wet ditch, and as he couldn't free hisself he got drownded. He 'd got together stock enough, as he said, to last 'en right through all eternity and longer. Oh ! there was lots of 'em there. Well, I 'd got my little load up the beach, and being pretty hot, says I, ' Now for a drink,' so I spiled a tub, but 'twas a bad one. Then I spiled another, and, you 'd scarcely believe me, but he was bad too."

" Salt water had got into them, Joe ? "

" No, 'twas hardly that neither. Blest if I knew what it was, so away I go down over the bank to Lobb. ' Hullo, Joe,' he says, catching sight of me, ' how long you been up ? ' ' Haven't long come,' I says. ' Have yer had a wet ? ' he asks. ' No,' I says, ' I 've tapped two,

and they 'm bad.' Then he says, ' There 's a lot of bad ones in 'em. I 'll see if I can find yer a good 'un. Give us a hand.' With that me and he went on tappin' and spilin', and spilin' and tappin', from his great stack all day, and they was all the same, just like mine. ' Now, Joe,' he 'd say, ' jest smell this spile-hole—that 's all right to me.' ' Yes, that 's the proper smell,' I 'd say, but when we come to tap 'en—'twas the c'rect colour, too—you couldn't taste it. Well, after a bit the pile of bad ones that we 'd a-heaved out was as big as the good ones, that is, I mean, what we hadn't sampled, and poor old Lobb was getting weak and teazy. ' What do 'ee do with the bad ones, Mr. Lobb ? ' I asked. ' There 'll be some young women with wings on 'em around directly, and they 'll take 'em away and put the place to rights,' he says, and sat down to rest himself. ' How long have yer been at this ? ' I then asked. ' Ever since I came up,' he says, disappointed like and surly. I says, ' I think I 'll go down now and see how Jimmy Kay is getting on.' For I don't mind telling you, Cap'n, that I was chucking dry. On the way I noticed that the stuff was still coming in by the shipload, and the folk would all rush to

try every fresh cargo. Jimmy had marked off the corner of the beach for hisself. He was stripped to the waist like a wrastler, gimlet in one hand, chisel in another, and a hammer looking out of his breeches pocket. 'You 'm busy, Mr. Kay,' I says. 'Yes, we 've got a pretty mess here, sure nuff, it 's like a thing bewitched,' he says. 'Is it a good sample ? ' I asked, innercent like. 'I 'll tell 'ee when I find it,' he says. 'Here, Joe,' he went on, 'do you know good sperets when you smell it ? ' 'Sometimes,' I says, 'but I 'm deceived over this.' That 's strange,' he says, 'but it 's deceived me ever since I 've been here, now six months a-gone. Yet somehow I can't make up me mind but what it 's the right article. If I wasn't in heaven you 'd hear me swearin' afore this.' 'Do 'ee think the sailors have doctored it, Mr. Kay, comin' across ? ' I asked 'en. 'No,' he says, wiping off the sweat from his face, 'but I shouldn't be surprised to hear that they have made a mistake and run it in the wrong harbour.' "

"What did it actually taste like, Joe ? " I inquired.

"Water, Cap'n. And do you know what my belief is ? "

"No, Joe."

"Well, I 'll tell 'ee. I do believe that up in heaven, although the colour and smell is right, and it 's all free, yet to we smugglers sperets is tasteless."

Joe's dream led me to think that he was a waverer, and would be of little assistance in a tight corner. That this opinion of mine was right I soon had the opportunity of proving. I decided to have one more run at the Porth before laying up for the winter, unless of course I could find another suitable pitch on the south coast, when for the sake of the crew rather than my own I should be prepared to continue the trade. I had, however, to proceed warily, for around my own district I was watched like a John Dory will watch a shad when he has made up his mind to eat it. All my sailings and arrivals I knew were reported, and the Customs were not slow in concluding that between five days and a week after I had set sail there would be a landing of goods somewhere on the coast. Offers of bribes were constantly made by plain-clothes men to my crew, if only they would open their mouths, but a man couldn't be a traitor in those days without having to leave his home and

clearing the country. Not that the thought of this had any effect on my men ; they were loyal to me, loyal to the cause, and loyal to the sea.

The next run, however, did not end so satisfactorily as it might have done.

CHAPTER XIV

AT GRIPS WITH DEATH

A STIFF north-westerly breeze sprang up when off shore, which prevented a rowing-boat being launched, and being too risky to wait in case it increased to a gale, I approached the land as near as I dared, and dropped the goods overboard with sinkers attached. Then I signalled by lantern to the waiting helpers what I had done, and got away only just in time to prevent being blown in against the rocks and wrecked. As it was, the ship's boy was washed overboard with one great wave, and washed back on deck again with the next. In the ordinary way Joe and his friends had an easy salvage job to carry out. All they had to do was to wait for the seas to drop, then put out and pick the stuff up. They would afterwards store or hide the goods until the patrons called for them. But it didn't quite finish like that, and it constituted the only occasion where through no fault of mine the customers got nothing for their outlay, and the

venture money was only sufficient to pay expenses.

As soon as I heard that there had been a fiasco I visited Mr. Callaway again.

"How did it all happen?" I inquired.

"I am unable to explain it properly, Cap'n. You had better see Joe. I 'll send for him."

"What 's this I hear of you, Joe?" I asked, when he appeared a few minutes later. "How did you come to lose the tubs?"

"There was a curious thing over that, Cap'n," he said, "and I 'll tell 'ee about it! We had to wait two days afore we could put out for the stuff. The seas was that high that no boat ever built could live in 'em. Dick, that 's my brother-in-law, and his mate Jim, was pulling, and we hadn't gone very far afore I seen what looked to me like a bundle of old clothes just awash on our port bow. 'Hold hard minute, Dick!' I sang out. 'What 'ee make of that?' He and Jim both had a look. 'We 'll soon see,' says Jim, who gave two or three extry strokes, and so brought the boat right alongside of it. 'Whatever is it?' says Dick, and he gave it a poke with his oar. Then the bundle turned over and back again, and we

could see he was a dead 'un, floating face downwards. Gosh ! it gave us all a bit of a turn. He had long black hair, and it was floating about his head for all the world like a clump of this 'ere fine sea-weed. 'What shall us do ?' I says. 'Let 's go and get a load of tubs. He won't hurt,' says Dick, 'he 'll be ashore in an hour.' 'No, he won't,' says Jim, 'he 's going up Channel.' I says, 'Let 's take 'en in ; you wouldn't like to be left there if you was he.' So we took ' en in, and propped 'en up in the bow, and a great lashing chap he was. 'Now we got 'en in we best row 'en ashore,' says Dick, 'and come out again.' I was very glad to hear this, for he was as ugly as sin, and I didn't like his company. It fair gave us the creeps to look at 'en. He appeared to me as if he was a sailor washed overboard.

"When we got ashore there was nobody about, so Jim says, 'Perhaps we shall find somebody in the Cornish Arms who will tell us what to do wid 'en.' So I says : 'Well, I 'm offering no objection to that, as I 've got a nasty taste in my mouth, and I 'd like to wash it out.' Jim he says, 'Hear, hear, we deserve a damper.' There was no one there,

howsomever, and Mrs. Trelawney, who keeps the place, is as deaf as a granite post."

"She fastens the bell-rope to one of her thumbs, I understand, Joe," said Mr. Callaway, "when she 's not in the bar."

"Yes, sir. If you was to put her inside the biggest bell in the church she wouldn't hear it ring. Well, as I was a-saying of, we had maybe a glass apiece, when Mrs. Trelawney's little grandsonny, Jackie, poked his nose in at the door and says, 'Hi! your mate isn't comin'!' This made us all laugh, as you can fancy. 'Isn't he? Go and tell 'en, Jackie, that we 'em waitin' for 'en,' says Dick. 'All right,' says Jackie, and away he went like billyho. A minute or two arter back he come. 'I can't make 'en hear,' he squeaked. 'I think he 's gone to sleep.' I thought Dick would have busted hisself laughing, and me and Jim was forced to smile a brave, tidy smile. 'Ah,' Dick went on, 'that 's jest like 'en. You give 'en a shake, sonny, and wake 'en up.' Away went the little nipper, quite proud and happy-like to carry out his errand. ''Tis a shame!' says Jim, 'you might frighten the boy into fits,' but this didn't stop Dick from laughin'. Maybe 'twas a

minute arterwards, when back he came again, panting and nigh out of breath. 'I woke 'en up, and he 's coming,' he says, and afore we had time to say anything, away the little chap scampered. I didn't like the sound of it, nor did none of us, and dang it ! not one of us spoke. Dick was jest a-raising his glass, but he set it down again on the table with a jerk. Poor Jim —well, you know Jim's great red face—he went as white as if you 'd a-heaved 'en into a hutch of flour."

"What did you feel like, Joe ?" I asked, as even now, at the recital and recollection of events, he was showing big beads of perspiration.

"Well, I tell 'ee I felt the sickest man as was to be found that day on sea or shore," and Joe wiped his brow with the sleeve of his coat.

"In a minute we heard some footsteps comin'. You couldn't mistake 'em. The sucking sound that he made with his water-logged boots was as plain as daylight. Then I thought of that ugly face coming round the corner, and we looked at one another, but never said nothing, nor moved. He waited for a second on the step, then came in and shut the door. I

never saw such a sight. His hair was hanging around his head like you see it on a stump-tailed hoss. Sea-water was still dripping from his clothes, and his eyes was dull and bleary—the gashliest pair I ever seen. There was no mistake about it, if you had dug him up from a grave he couldn't have looked worse. He planted his back against the door, and looked at us steady without saying a word for maybe a minute or more. Then poor old Jim, who was still all of a tremble, gave a squeak, and fell over on to the stone floor. As the doctor said, he had too much blood, and unless yer could have drawed off a gallon or so nothing would have saved 'en. The dead man moved towards 'en, and lifted 'en up as easy as you would lift a chair, carried 'en back, and propped 'en up by his side, and there he stood, stiff and stark, by the corner of the settle. Then he looked at me and Dick. He moved his eyes from one to another, as much as to say, 'Come on, who 's next?' How long this went on, Cap'n, I can't tell 'ee, but the next thing I heard was Dick. He 'd choked hisself, and rolled over on to the ground in a sort of spasm or fit. Down came the dead man, slow and quiet, and gathered up

Dick like a sheaf of wheat, and put him up by the side of Jim. He fixed his gashly great eyes then on me, and I thought my turn had come. I tried to think what I should do, but 'twas no use. I was like a thing mesmerised. All of a sudden I seemed to find my legs, and I gave a spring right at the window. I was through quicker than you could wink, taking glass, framework and all, and I cut myself shameful. Outside I commenced to holler for help. In five minutes I 'd got together the blacksmith, and a chap who 'd come down for coals, half a dozen women, and a score of children, and we fairly surrounded the place. Most of us had sticks, and the blacksmith brought out a seven-pound hammer, so that if he 'd a-showed hisself they would a-scat his brains out. Arter a time, and bit by bit, we got into the bar, and there was poor Jim dead as mutton, and Dick was slowly getting over his fit, jest as I had left 'em, but the dead man was gone. Then we started a hunt for 'en all over the house, pigsties, and garden, and half an hour later we found 'en in the bow of the boat on the beach where we first put 'en."

"He 'd gone back again, Joe, he liked being dead best," I ventured.

"He must have crept back when nobody was looking."

"Well, what about the tubs?"

"Afore we had time to think about they a gale come up with a ground sea big enough to shift a cargo of lead, and the tubs that weren't smashed on the rocks drifted up coast with the tide."

"The gale didn't come up for another week, Joe," put in Mr. Callaway.

"Well, sir," replied Joe, "I hadn't got the heart for smuggling, and I don't think arter this I ever shall again."

"Do you mean that, Joe?"

"Yes, Cap 'n, I 've a-give it up now for good, and so 's Dick out of respect for poor old Jim."

"It seems a strange tale, Mr. Callaway," I said after Joe had left us.

"I should think it was due to a mixture of superstition and strong drink, Cap'n," replied my host.

I felt, nevertheless, that whatever it was due to, I had lost the co-operation of three men who had been, and of two who still might have been, of great assistance to me.

CHAPTER XV

A CHANGE OF LUCK

On returning home after my visit to Mr. Callaway's I heard of a big group of venturers who were searching for a reliable shipper to undertake periodical runs at Fowey. They had not been treated properly or fairly by the local fraternity, and decided to look about for a more trustworthy skipper. In their inquiries they were referred to me, and much to the disgust, no doubt, of their old suppliers, I carried out several large runs for these new customers, which gave them every satisfaction.

The King's men, however, during this period were as active as ever, and as they hadn't been very fortunate lately in their captures, their vigilance was intense.

"They 're determined to have yer, Cap'n," said my mate one day in port.

"It seems like it, Paul."

"There 's two reasons for it, Cap'n. They want to get yer away in the Navy afore you are

over thirty, and they know you 're a first-class man o' business, and too quick for 'em."

" Have you heard anything lately ? " I asked.

" Not much, but I can see that the shoremen are working with the seamen, and the two revenue cutters are never very far away from this harbour."

" How did you find that out ? "

" Well, Cap'n, my sister is a-courting Jim Trenoweth, and he 's well in with the 'Cisemen working this district."

" I hope, Paul, you don't tell her too much of our business."

" No, Cap'n, never fear. I listen to all that 's said, but don't say much."

" What about old Ginger Whiskers ? " I asked.

" He 's squinting about all over the place now, kind of General Inspector for the county. If what I hear is true, he 's a-told 'em that, whatever it costs, they 've got to catch the King."

" The King ! Who 's the King ? "

" Why, don't you know, Cap'n ? "

" No."

" Fancy you of all men. Why, it 's yourself. They allays call you the King."

" Did this come from Trenoweth, Paul ? "

" Yes, he let it out last night arter he 'd had a drop, said they never mention names. Old Dick Kudlip of Fowey they call ' Dad,' and Couch of Polperro they refer to as ' Old Brandy-nose.' "

" When 's Trenoweth going to marry your sister, Paul ? "

" When he 's a-saved money enough, Cap'n."

" Don't you be too free with him till the wedding," I put in as a caution.

So I was now known by my enemies as " The King." A strange sense of pride stole over me. For a man still under thirty I felt that I had achieved something. Yes, I might say that over my own little circle I was some sort of a real king. I was loved, feared, obeyed. I could taste the joys of royalty, and yet live in defiance of rules and regulations, and I felt that I must make an effort to live up to the title.

A few days later I set out again for Rusco for another cargo for my new patrons. I had a clear run there and back until within a mile of Fowey Harbour, when in the starlight I saw a couple of suspicious-looking shadows ahead, a quarter mile apart, that appeared to be waiting for someone.

" What do you make of 'em, Paul ? " I asked the mate.

"Revenue cutters, Cap'n, or I 'm a worm-eaten land-lubber."

"They 're bearing down on us surely," I said, as their forms seemed to be drawing together right in our track.

The night breeze wasn't more than four knots and blowing fair, so there was little chance of escape from a pair of full-rigged cutters, which I knew could sail at least three points nearer the wind than *The Dove* could, even with a clean bottom. Besides, if I came about I should be immediately suspected, and it was like asking for trouble.

"Make ready to cut away quick and stand by," and Paul got the crew in their places in a few seconds.

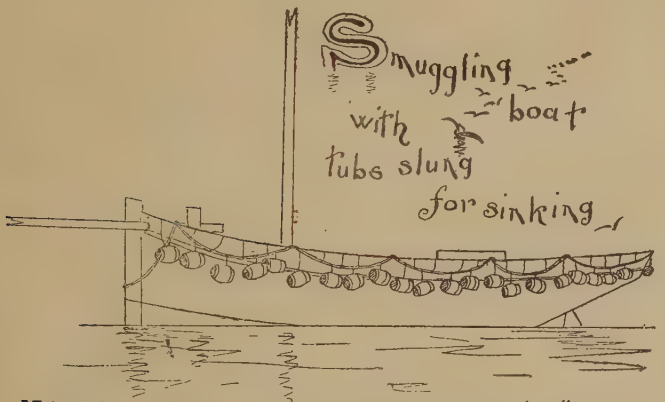
Bang! went a gun from the nearest craft. They had let off a blank from one of their seven-pounders, and a blinding wisp of flame shot out across our bows, lighting up the rigging, and then plunging us in darkness and smoke.

"Cut away there!" I shouted, just loud enough to be heard by everyone on board, and in a second a hundred tubs which had been hanging to the tub-rail around the gunwale since dark slid into the water with a dull splash,

which even if heard might easily have been produced by a pail of swab wash.

"Heave to!" came a rough voice from over the intervening water. "We are going to board you!"

"Come along, then," I replied, as I starboarded the helm and swung her round into the breeze, where she stayed almost stationary with gently-flapping sails.



Note.—The sinking-stones are bent on, and kept on deck, till just before slipping.

A cutter now approached on each side of me with much shouting and noise. They seemed to be racing which one should get alongside first, and in the short tacks they were taking to accomplish this there was much squeaking of

blocks and rattle of running gear. Two or three figures with drawn pistols appeared on the bow of each, showing that they had prepared themselves for all opposition.

"Do you take me for a Dutchman or a pirate?" I sang out.

"We know *The Dove's* little game," was the reply.

While I was speculating as to how they came to have our name so pat, they barged into us pretty well together on both beams, and three or four of the crew from each sprang on board with much bluster and brandishing of cutlasses.

"We suspect you of smuggling," said an officer, with affected affability, from a prominent position on the larger of the cutters "and my men 'll just run over you. You best take it quietly, Hawken, and don't let 's have unnecessary bloodshed."

"You 're all of you welcome. Go where you like on my boat under the circumstances, so long as you don't rummage her about too much, or take away what doesn't belong to you."

Each visitor now lowered her sails, and made themselves fast to me by their painters, so it seemed they were in for a long stay, and had made up their minds that it was a fair catch.

Lamps which the men had brought with them and lit on board were flitting about as they searched every likely corner for contraband. After two or three minutes I heard a yell of delight coming up from the cabin, and this was followed by a couple of men, as hungry for our arrest as a stray cat for a fish dinner, bringing up a tub of brandy. It then struck me that Paul had indiscreetly secreted this tub for a friend, and it had been overlooked. It was taken to the officer for examination, and shortly afterwards he announced that I and my mate would be charged with defrauding the Customs by smuggling into the country French brandy.

"I shall leave," he went on, "three men on board your boat. The crew will be taken ashore, and you and the mate will consider yourselves under arrest."

So it was that that night Paul and I were locked up together in the Customs House at Fowey to stand our trial in due course before the magistrates at Tywardreath.

My conviction would mean good-bye to *The Dove*, for the least that could happen would be that she would be forfeited and I should be pitch-forked into the Navy. I had to go through it now, and my chance of escape I saw

was small. During the three days that elapsed before the trial I had the opportunity of turning things over in my mind, with a view of accounting for this bit of bad luck. Paul and I were herded together in a kind of sail loft (known as the clink), with a dirty old hammock apiece to sleep in slung under the roof. One was restricted to walk up and down the centre for fear of knocking one's head against the sloping rafters. There was a single window, and a small one at that, some ten feet from the ground, and outside was a sentry mounted night and day. To get up to the place you had to climb a ladder, and then pass through a trap door in the floor, this door being secured from below. The walls were built of slate, some two feet thick. To break out, therefore, was somewhat difficult.

"What do you make of it, Paul?" I asked, as soon as I felt we could talk without risk.

He didn't know.

"Can you tell me how it was that they expected *The Dove?*"

But Paul was morose and silent.

"Don't you think there has been some treachery at work?"

Paul had no explanation whatever to offer.

" The seamen must have known when I left Mevagissey, and that I was bound for Fowey. They also knew who I was, even when it was too dark to make out *The Dove's* lines."

" That 's right, Cap'n," said Paul uneasily.

" Your sister, I suppose, has heard from you that we have been trading with Fowey ? "

" I may have told her so on the quiet."

" Then she 's told this sweetheart of hers, and he 's told the shoremen, for which he has no doubt got a hatful of money, and, according to your own words, as the cutters' men and the shore service have been working together, they passed the information on."

" If I get out of this trouble, Cap'n, and I wish I may, I shall soon know, you can lay any money on that."

On the day of the trial we were awake at daybreak, indeed I had hardly slept for the night. I had prepared a dozen defences, explanations. I was determined to catch at every floating cork, but to my mind almost everything depended on the chance of my having a friend on the bench.

After breakfast of bread and cheese and fried gurnards, we were handcuffed together and placed in the back seat of the official dog-cart.

I had vivid recollections of the previous occasion—now many years ago—when the handcuffs were put on me, and time hadn't improved the remembrance.

By the side of the driver sat a Customs man with a loaded musket, and behind us, on horseback, rode another, armed in a similar way. Evidently they were making provision for an attempted rescue on the journey to the Court. This was just possible, and Paul and I kept our eyes skinned for the first indication or encouraging sign. It turned out to be a false hope, however. We were taken over to Tywardreath at a smart trot all the way, and were brought up before the Bench charged with smuggling. There was quite a crowd present, and, glancing around, I noticed many old acquaintances and friends. Of course, as might be expected, Ginger Whiskers, in full rig, was the chief of the ceremonies. He was in high glee. He marshalled the witnesses together in one corner of the Court, and quite dwarfed and snubbed the commander of the cutter and the seamen, as if they had done dothing, and were of no account. He grinned so much that the ugly gap in his gums was always visible. "The King" had been struck off his throne. A better

piece of luck could scarcely have happened to the Preventive Service.

I scanned the Bench in vain for a friendly face. I had no recollection of having seen any of them before, and I felt like a man with cold feet.

"The Excise have at last captured a very successful and therefore dangerous smuggler," announced the chief to the magistrates. "He was brought up in the illicit business from infancy. I may say that I have known him all my life."

"And killed his father!" shouted someone from the back.

"Silence! Silence in Court!" broke in the usher in stentorian tones.

"The Service have been trying for some years to bring it home to him, but without success. He has always been astute enough to outwit us. Starting without means some fifteen years ago, the prisoner has, as I shall show, become the most flourishing and wealthy smuggler in the county—a position gained entirely from the profits of his illegal operations. Many tales of horror and bloodshed are associated with his adventures, which I am at the moment investigating. On this occasion he was caught red-handed at midnight with contraband brandy

on his lugger at the time, and his mate is charged along with him for aiding and abetting in the offence. I ask your Worship, when you have heard the case, to make the usual order that the two prisoners be sent into the King's Navy, and that the boat called *The Dove* be confiscated."

I was not going to take all this lying down, but before doing or saying anything I wanted to make sure to what extent the magistrates were either for or against me. Although unknown to me personally, they might be patrons of mine, and I on my part might be known by repute to them.

After this opening statement the Excise proceeded to call their various witnesses—how rom information received I was expected, how they laid in wait for me and caught me, and what they found aboard as the result of the search.

Then the Chairman of the Bench put a question which when my turn came I intended to raise. He was a benevolent-looking old party, with long white mutton-chop whiskers, and a square red face.

" How can you say that the possession of one tub of uncustomed brandy makes a man a smuggler ? " he asked, and with that all the other

magistrates sitting in line turned towards him and pricked up their ears.

The chief was staggered like a man who had lost his anchor in a gale.

"Contraband is contraband, whether the cargo consisted of one pint or a thousand gallons," he pleaded when he regained his speech.

"It may have been a present from a grateful customer across the Channel," the Chairman went on.

"Haven't you g-g-got to show he 's tr-tr-trad-trading in it?" said another member of the Bench, with a stammer big enough to turn a horse lame.

"What became of the cargo which you say your information led you to believe was on board?" pursued the Chairman.

"That was thrown overboard, sir, either before or when they spied us."

"Yes, or it might never have been there. Perhaps your information was wrong."

"Do I understand that you are not satisfied then, sir?" pleaded old Ginger, almost in tears.

"No, not as the case stands."

"Hear, hear!" exclaimed a voice from the audience. "Cap'n Hawken ain't no smuggler, he 's a gentleman."

"Silence!" roared the attendant.

This was followed by a lot of head-scratching and argument, but the Bench were firm as rocks. They were there, they said, to administer the Law as they found it.

"The charge is dismissed," announced the Clerk in gentle tones a few minutes later, and Paul and I were liberated from custody.

Once outside the Court there was much hand-shaking and jubilation. My friends had rallied round me by the dozen, and were now rejoicing at my victory.

The Customs had suffered a severe reverse, and one which they were not likely to forget.

Ginger Whiskers and his satellites were boiling over with disappointment. As he pushed past us his different-coloured and evil-looking eyes turned on me.

"Be careful, Wesley Hawken!" he hissed in my ear. "I shall have yer yet, never fear."

"You catch me fairly and squarely, and you 're welcome to me," I replied; "but fight clean, as I always have, and always intend to do."

He showed the gaps in his gums, and his voice crackled into a bit of callous laughter as he strode away, nose in air, with all the pomp and bluster of an overfed farmyard cockerel.

CHAPTER XVI

BLOOD–MONEY

ONE of the most interested parties attending the trial was the distributing agent, a publican by trade, with whom I was dealing at Fowey, and who was really employing and paying me for the work. As might be expected, he didn't make himself very conspicuous until after the verdict, and there being then nothing to fear, he drove Paul and me back with him.

"I expected it would end in this way, Cap'n," he said, "and I came over more with the object of fetching you than anything else."

"Were the customers upset at the loss?" I asked.

"There 's no loss, Cap'n. We located the goods last night, and made arrangements to salve them to-day while the men were all here."

"You thought I should get off?"

"Get off! They never had a dog's chance in a faked-up case of this sort. Get off! Why the Chairman of the Bench won't go to bed to-night till he gets his tubs and sees that the sample is right, teetotaller though he is."

" Who do you think sold me ? " I inquired.

" No one this end. That must have taken place at Mevagissey."

" Leave that to me to find out," put in Paul in a dejected tone of voice.

I had to wait some hours for the return of the heads of the Service before I was allowed to regain ownership of *The Dove*, which was still in the harbour moored by the side of one of the cutters.

By this time, however, all the crew had put in an appearance, and there was much bitter invective over the ceremony of retaking possession.

Ginger Whiskers was not present. He had already been crushed, and no doubt wished to spare himself further humiliation. Besides which, this was rather more a sea affair than a shore business, and the chief was not the sort of man to identify himself more than he could help with the failures of the sister service. Had I been convicted, it would have been another kettle of fish, for in that case he would have been the most prominent and important personage to be found anywhere.

" You won't be able to take her to Devonport

to-day, sonny," said one of my crew to the Commander, by way of opening the banter.

"I don't want any of your lip," he replied, "and if you can't show proper respect to the King's uniform when you see it I shall have to teach you."

"Orlright, it 's easy to talk like that when you 're in ballast all the time with a cargo of pistols and cutlasses. Never mind, better luck next time!"

This was the style of the talk between the cutter's men and mine while we were making ready, with the exception of my mate Paul. He was very quiet, and there was evidently something on his mind. A good sailor-man, who knew his work thoroughly and was fond of it, would have been my report of him. Now he was doing the work of two men.

We made home an hour or so later, but not before the news of the victory, and the little fishing port gave us a hearty welcome.

I had for some time past moved into a larger house with my mother, and next day Paul called on me with a long face.

"Cap'n," he commenced, in more serious tones than I had ever heard him before, "I saw

my sister last night, and Jim Trenoweth wants to put up the banns next Sunday."

" I thought he had no money to get married."

" He says he 's a-got the money now, and he don't want to wait no longer."

" Try and find out, Paul, how much he has. I 'm afraid he won't be likely to tell you where he got it."

" He told my sister he could put his hands on fifty pound," and Paul cast his eyes down shamefacedly.

" Fifty pounds ? "

" Yes, Cap'n, blood-money ! "

" Did you tell her ? "

" Yes, Cap'n, and she went boiling mad. She says she 'll scat his brains out." After a pause he continued, " I 'm not over-concerned about her, it 's meself that I 'm worriting over. How do I stand with you, zur ? "

" Well, you are a thick-head, of course, Paul, a wind-bag. You ought to have been a woman with a mouth like a cod-fish and two tongues in it, then—then——"

" Don't be too hard on me, Cap'n, there is such things that no human bein's can't put up with—where nature breaks down—and that 's

one of 'em," and there was a tremble in Paul's voice.

" Did you find out where the money came from ? "

" No, Cap'n, but I think I can. The question is, if I do that and clear the business right up, how do I stand with you ? "

" It 's too soon to talk about that, Paul."

" Well, Cap'n, afore you make your mind up give me another chance to put things straight. You never were a hard man, and up to now I haven't made many mistakes like this. If I make good—if I make good, Cap'n—there, it 's no use," and burying his face in his cap the burly frame of this man, who was generally so cool in emergency and danger, swayed with emotion.

" You 'd best see me again, Paul, when you have found out more particulars. Meantime proceed warily, you can rely upon my treating you fairly."

I saw Paul on board next day, as usual, clearing things up, but he did not refer to our chat of the previous evening.

Late the following day he called again.

" What further news have you, Paul ? " I

asked, as I noticed he was a little slow at opening the conversation.

"My sister, Cap'n, told Jim as she didn't believe 'en, and that she wouldn't believe 'en, nor consent to no banns being put up, until she saw the money." Then he paused.

"That was a good move," I said encouragingly.

"Last night he said he would show her the money, but he didn't care about bringin' it to the house. Then my sister said she would meet 'en at eight o'clock up Parsons Lane under the elms. 'Twas a darkish evening, and she and mother got there first and waited for 'en."

"Why did your mother go, Paul?"

"She was there to see fair play. She warned my sister Liza that if she married a man on blood money she 'd never speak to her again. Well, when they heard Jim coming up the lane mother hid away under a tamarisk bush. 'Have yer got the money?' said Liza. 'Yes, here 's the money, Liza, in this,' and he drawed out a great bag full of sovereigns. 'How much is it?' said Liza. 'Fifty pound,' said Jim, and he handed 'em over to her. 'Why, wherever did you get all this?' asked Liza. 'I saved it up,'

said he. 'That 's a lie—a downright lie, Jim!' 'Well,' says he, 'I had it give to me.' "

Paul here was out of breath, so I inquired—

"Did your mother overhear all that, Paul?"

"Yes, Cap'n, every word of it. 'Jim,' says Liza, 'is this blood-money?' and Jim never spoke. 'Did yer hear me,' asked Liza louder, 'is this blood-money?' Still he never answered. 'Speak, Jim,' says Liza, who was now getting her temper up, but he didn't say nothing more. He reached one hand out fer it, and tried to put the other one around her waist, but he didn't do neither. My mother stepped out silent and quick from the overhanging bush behind him. 'You dirty varmint!' she said, and hit him on the nut with the knobbly end of a thick stick. He reeled maybe a second on his feet, then fell in the roadway, and rolled into the ditch."

Here Paul commenced to fumble in his pocket for something. Then he produced a bag about the size of a cricket ball, and placed it on the table with a chink.

"Here 's the money, Cap'n. Now, how do I stand with you?"

"I can't touch the money under any

circumstances, Paul. But first of all tell me what became of Trenoweth ? "

" They took the gold home, and then went back and waited for 'en to recover hisself. They wanted to satisfy themselves that they hadn't injured 'en permanently. They waited near by where he couldn't see 'em till nigh on midnight, but he never come to. Then they thought they must have killed 'en, and got frightened. Arter a bit they crept silently over to the spot and looked into the ditch, but he was gone. He couldn't have been hurt much. His sore head won't trouble him long, and he 'll go quiet enough now."

" So far as the money is concerned, Paul, you can do what you like with it. I would suggest that you divide it amongst the crew."

" Very well, Cap'n, but how do I stand, if it 's a fair question ? "

" You shall stand where you did, Paul—my mate—and we 'll say no more about it."

Paul jumped from his seat, his eyes glistening with moisture, and his lips broke into a smile, and poking his hand towards me, he said—

" Shake, Cap'n ! "

And I shook it heartily.

CHAPTER XVII

SQUIRE BOTALLACK, M.P.

AFTER my last little encounter with the authorities it occurred to me that I should have to change my tactics a bit. Ginger I knew would be on the job, and that wall-eye of his would know no proper sleep until he had got me safely stowed away. He and his gang had already declared open war against me, and had I not the best of evidence that they would stop neither at bribery nor any form of trickery to track me down. In weighing all this up, I came to the conclusion that foremost *The Dove* was now too well known to please me, in addition to which, although as safe as an arm-chair, she was not fast enough for the work ahead, so I determined to get a better boat before I again embarked on cross-Channel trade.

I had my own idea of the lines of a vessel for the job, and took coach to Devonport, either to find one or to give orders for a new boat to be built. There was nothing, however, at Devonport which suited me, so I sketched out designs

of my own, and placed an order for a cutter of thirty-five tons. Her principal measurements were to be: Length, forty-five feet from stem to stern-post, with a beam of fourteen feet; her mast was forty-seven feet, with a top-mast of twenty-seven feet, and she carried a forty-foot boom; her bowsprit was thirty feet, and the gaff twenty-five feet. The price was two hundred and fifty pounds.

The contractors maintained that she 'd be only a fair-weather boat, and if a squall struck her with anything like her full sail up she 'd snap her mast or topple over like an old elm in a gale. I was not alarmed. I was out for light cargoes and speed, and I reckoned when I got used to her, and she to me, that she would take a bit of catching.

I introduced one or two secret hiding-places in her hull in case of emergencies, and by the side of her stern-post was an iron pipe which ran right down into the water below the ship. This pipe was almost invisible, and I intended to run a rope or chain through it in such a way that I could tow under water into a harbour or up a river what I liked without being detected.

The Government had recently made a

regulation that it was a criminal offence for any coast trader or fishing-boat to carry fire-arms, so it was of no use now to rely on force as in Cap'n Zimon's day, as if one managed to escape by so doing the Customs secured the victory afterwards from the fact that they were beaten off by fire-arms. This didn't concern me much, as up to now I had never had any occasion to employ such methods. It was in future, apparently, to be a battle of wits, as well as speed; so I ordered a double set of sails of different colour, and a second top-mast of smaller length for my new craft, and by a simple arrangement of sliding out the name-plate and substituting another I could change her name in a few seconds. In short, I reckoned upon converting her into a new boat at a few hours' notice.

To start with, I decided to call her *The Tam-o'-Shanter*. The day I brought her into port who should be waiting for me but Squire Botallack, M.P.

"Fine day for a sail, Cap'n," he said, meeting me on the quay.

"If you come aboard, Squire, I 'll give you one."

"May I bring Mrs. Botallack and my daughter as well, Cap'n?"

I said—

"Nothing would give me greater pleasure."

So he sent word for the ladies to come down, and that the horses were to be taken out and stabled till his return, and the party came aboard for a cruise.

The Squire was a dapper little man, with a round shiny face as red as a ripe apple. He was our biggest landowner hereabouts, and although he was a stickler for his rights, you could never find a person who had a word of complaint against him. He and the family spent half their time in London, and the other half at their home some six miles in from the coast. What his Parliamentary duties were no one knew, nor could anyone tell you what he did for his county, or might have done, or should have done. His butler and coachman brought down with them the report that the Government couldn't do without him, and if he wasn't there they would have to shut up Parliament, and everybody believed them.

"Have you been down from London long, Squire?" I said as he joined me at the helm.

"No, I arrived a couple of days ago, and there 's likely to be another election inside of three months."

"You 'll be wanting some more refreshment, I suppose?"

The Squire's little red face expanded into a chuckle.

"Well, an election without spirits would be worse than a teetotal wedding. My word, Cap'n, what a rate we are travelling! Is it safe?"

"You are quite safe, sir."

We had just felt breeze enough to fill the few sails we had up, and she scudded through the water like a tope at play. There was no rasping of badly-set masts or tacky varnish. There was no squeak with the running gear. Before the wind she practically kept pace with the breeze, and on board there was almost a calm.

"You have a spanker here, Cap'n," went on the Squire, although it was plain to see he was not at home.

"Your next cargo, I hope, will come across in this. How much will you want, sir?"

"Fifty tubs and five hundred silk handkerchiefs. I shall have to make a big show this

time, as the opposition, I hear, are likely to make a strenuous fight of it."

"Is the brewer standing against you again, Squire?"

"No, he 's had enough. They are putting up Mr. Willyams from the mines this time, and I hear it said that he 's ready to spend two thousand pounds to capture the seat."

The Squire's daughter now joined us.

"Mother is getting a little nervous, I think, although she won't own to it. The boat seems to lurch over so," she said, and her face was very white.

Although I had little more than half sail up, I didn't wish them to feel uncomfortable, so I said—

"I 'll take in a bit of sail, miss."

It made little difference, however. She would go over on her beam and cut the waves like a knife, and I believe if it had not been for the stays in between, the ladies would have toppled overboard.

"Then, Cap'n, I can depend on you as before?"

"Yes, Squire, and I 'll think out a landing-place meanwhile, unless you can put it right with the Government men."

"Ah, that 's a good notion. Who should I see on that matter, Cap'n ?"

"You ought to have a chat with the Chief Inspector of the County, quartered at Truro. He 's a man with ginger whiskers, has different coloured eyes, and front teeth missing. He 'll want careful handling," I added, by way of a caution.

"I 'll pump him, Cap'n, and then see you again. I can imagine it will make all the difference if I can get a sort of a free pass for the goods."

"It will, Squire, and I can do it cheaper, too."

That the Squire had a hard nut to crack I felt sure, and the thought of it set me alight with excitement. The whole idea opened up big possibilities. I knew that thousands of cargoes in the past had come in with free passes, and if one of the best-known and respected of the county Members of Parliament couldn't arrange it for election purposes, then others stood a small chance.

In addition, so far as I was concerned personally it would mean that Ginger would be delivered over for all time into my own hands, and a truce between us must follow. What

made the situation more interesting was a chat I had next day with Paul.

"I hear, Cap'n," he reported, "that our local Preventive man saw the Squire come aboard yesterday, and he was seen to make a note of it."

"I 'm not surprised at anything the Service does now, Paul."

"Well, afterwards he wrote a letter and took it to the Post Office, and it was addressed to the chief at Truro."

"How did you hear that?"

"The Postmaster told me so hisself, Cap'n."

"They 're welcome to the information, Paul, and I hope it will do them a lot of good."

A week went by, and the Squire sent a man over on horseback with a note for me. It ran as follows:—

"DEAR CAPTAIN,

"I want an hour's chat with you. I will send over a dog-cart for you this evening if convenient, as to which pray be good enough to let the bearer of this missive have your reply. I have charged him to deliver this communication into your hands only.

"Yours in gratitude,
"JAMES BOTALLACK."

The conveyance duly arrived, and half an hour later I drew up at the Squire's great lodge gates. Amid much jangling of locks and bolts they were swung open by the lodge-keeper with a creak, and we passed through.

As we approached the lawns we were greeted by the hooting and squealing of the peacocks and guinea-fowl from the boughs of the pines, in retaliation, no doubt, for being disturbed just when they were settling down for the night, and a few minutes afterwards, in grandiose fashion, I was ushered into the Squire's library by as well-powdered a footman as I had ever seen. He wore black silk shorts and canary-coloured stockings, and a horsehair pig-tail that dangled almost to his waist.

The Squire was even a bigger swell, inasmuch as his evening rig-out was more gorgeous. He was coloured like a jay in full plumage, the inside of his coat being lined with blue, and edged all round with gold, but underneath it all he was as affable as ever.

"Be seated, Cap'n," he said, shaking hands, and waving me to the best arm-chair; "I am glad to see you."

"I am anxious to hear your news, Squire."

"Well, I saw Ginger Whiskers, as you call him. I called at his house in Truro. He gives one the impression of being a very important person. He has two subordinates in uniform who do nothing else but wait on him. They accompany him on his rounds, whether driving or riding.

"The house seems full of blunderbusses, pistols, cutlasses, handcuffs and suchlike, all primed and polished and ready for use.

"I opened out about the coming election, and as the Government were against my opponent, I said I feared there would be a great difficulty in retaining the seat on water, and I asked if he could help me, once in a way, to get in some brandy for the electors. To commence with, he said he was afraid it couldn't be done, and he asked me if I had found or could find a shipper. I said that I hadn't considered that question yet, but I thought that I should have no difficulty in the matter. Then he said it would be a difficult job for him to arrange, and he wanted to know how much it was worth to me. I said I should put it down at a matter of twenty guineas, and I offered to pay him then and there."

"You had a little luck, Squire," I put in.

"Yes, Cap'n, I feel I had. However, he wouldn't take the money, said it had best be paid after the run was over; so finally I arranged to let him know the date and place of landing, and he would see there was no interference."

"Do you think he meant it, Squire?"

"I think so." Then after a pause he said, "He is not a man, of course, whom I should select to repose confidence in owing to his forbidding appearance, but I feel he means what he says. You haven't much reliance in him, Cap'n?"

"I 'm afraid I have cause to feel the other way, Squire—if he knew that I was to be shipper——"

"You know your man better than I do, perhaps?"

"The first time I met him, Squire, when I was a lad, he drew blood from my wrists in putting on a pair of handcuffs—probably one of those which you saw—but I know only too well the sort of thing I must expect from him."

"Why so?"

"What would you expect, sir, from the man who killed your father?"

The Squire gasped hard ; it was plain to see he was deeply shocked.

" Killed him ! "

" Yes, sir," and I waited for the shot to go home.

" How ? "

" He fired point-blank at another man who threatened him, and the ball went through the heart of my father, who was standing by."

" Was he punished ? "

" No, sir, the only consolation my mother and family got was to be told that father, who was a sail-maker, shouldn't have been associated with such desperate company."

The Squire was silent for a bit.

I went on—

" Since then we 've had an encounter or two—nothing very serious—but I am hoping to be even with him yet."

" This is all new to me, Cap'n," he said seriously.

" I should also tell you that he knew before you saw him that you went for a sail with we that day."

The Squire reflected for a minute or two. Then he jumped up.

"By Gad, Cap'n," he exclaimed, "if he plays the traitor with me he 'll come off second best."

"You still think it all right?" I asked.

"I do, I 'll back my judgment."

"Very well, sir, the run will go through, and I will await your orders."

"Of course, if anything happens, Cap'n, meanwhile, to further disturb your confidence you will let me know."

So it was agreed, and shortly after we shook hands, and I was driven back home.

CHAPTER XVIII

A CHANNEL CROSSING

"It 's 'nation good to be at sea again, Cap'n," said Paul as we tacked our course across Channel and he relieved me at the helm, his face crinkling up with boyish delight as he spoke.

"That 's just what I feel," I replied, for I was getting tired of a life of inaction and devoid of any sort of adventure.

"Fishin' trips is all right to stretch the sails and keep the runnin' gear free, but give me a night aboard, Cap'n, that 's what I says, I can feel then that I 'm a sailor."

"Well, by the look of it, with this head wind, we shall have a couple of nights at sea."

"I 'm proud to think, Cap'n, that I 'm aboard *The Tammy Shanter* the first time she stays out all night."

"The local man will have something to talk about to-morrow, Paul. Fancy his face when he discovers that *The Tam-o'-Shanter* didn't put

in last night. It will be all up and down the coast in forty-eight hours."

"That it will, Cap'n. The King is on the job again—that 'll be the message. Is it a big order?"

"No, only a small one this time for the gold sluicers at Carnon Stream. We have to take the stuff through the Lion's Mouth up as far as Pill."

"Ah!" exclaimed Paul, with a crackle in his voice, "there 's very few cargoes been up there during the last few years, altho' back along there was more trade done there than anywhere else."

The sun was now setting, and from the after-cabin an appetising flavour of cooking pork chops and onions came out on the heavy air that reminded me of earlier days—days when as a boy of *The Happy Fanny* frying pork chops and potatoes were two of my earliest tasks. From boy, as Paul had just reminded me, I had risen to be King—King of a host of traders, and so styled by my enemies. Of course, who but the King should take a cargo of contraband up the Fal, through the Carrick Roads, and into what we smugglers long since

knew it by, viz. the Lion's Mouth. I had no doubt but that *The Tam-o'-Shanter* would be called upon to show her mettle, but in her I had a boat with a speed almost as fast as a sea-gull.

Before daybreak we had substituted her real name-plate for another. I knew that as soon as I moored her on the other side she would cause remark, and I had been too long at the game now to assist chatterboxes or to play into the hands of spies.

I was glad to renew old acquaintances with my Rusco friends, and again to hear tidings of the Government's latest movements and regulations.

"Ah, M'sieu le Capitaine, my dear, dear, M'sieu le Capitaine!" was the way in which one of the French merchants greeted me as I came ashore by the green and grimy landing-steps, "How are you, my jolly dogs? I hear they gr-rasp you and sc-c-ratch you. Is it not so? Yes?"

"Very nearly, Mr. Ratier," I replied, shaking his proferred hand.

"You shall come with me now, at once, my dear sar, and have a good feeds—Engleesh breakfast. Yes? Bifstake and a nice bottle

of Bordeaux, and we will drink to their discomfiture," and taking my arm, he led me away to his warehouse.

Mr. Ratier, or Monsieur Ratier, to give him his right title, was a stumpy little man, a great deal bigger around the middle than he was high. He was quite bald, yet possessed the darkest, stiffest, and finest moustache I had ever clapped eyes on. He had no neck, and the lobe of his ears rested on his shoulders. His face, for the size of his body, was small, and in addition colourless, and there dangled from under his vest some two or three links of a good fob big enough for an anchor cable, to which was attached a bunch of seals that must have weighed a pound. He was reputed to be the wealthiest spirit merchant in Rusco, and if the size of his cellarage was any indication, there was plenty of foundation for the rumour.

After quite a walk through underground departments set aside for cooperage, mixing, filling, and slinging, we reached a little dark and dismal room already prepared for the French eleven o'clock meal, and not long after we were discussing the merits of the host's "bifstake" and other things.

"You have a new boat, Capitaine. Yes? My customers tell me it is so, and she is very, what you call, speedful."

"That 's right, sir," I replied.

"Ah, then you will show them some pairs of clean heels. Do you require many tubs to-day? I have much good brandy."

"Only fifty to-day, and one cask of tobacco, but I hope to have a bigger order next time."

"Shall I get them ready for you, Capitaine? The price is the same. Soon we must make it more expensive."

"You can put the order in hand, Mr. Ratier. I shall shortly be wanting some silk handkerchiefs. Can you get me five hundred of good quality?"

"Yes, Capitaine. I get you some handkerchiefs very magnificient, and the price, it is cheap."

"I shan't require them perhaps for two months, but you will get them ready."

"Certainly, M'sieu le Capitaine, with the great pleasure."

Having settled my account, and paid a few more calls both ashore and afloat, we weighed anchor, and set sail about nightfall for the

crossing of one hundred and fifty miles to our destination.

Our cargo was on deck slung to the tub-rail to prevent it from shifting, and to be handy when we wanted it.

As the breeze was slight and fair, all but Paul (who took a spell at the helm) and the night watch turned in.

With the first streak of dawn I heard the relief helmsman shout for me, and by the time I got on deck Paul had also turned out from his broken nap.

"Here 's a cutter, Cap'n, coming up on the starboard quarter," said the man, "and she looks as if she was making for us. There, see, she 's just hoisting her jib."

"Oh, is she; we 'll hoist ours, then. Give me the helm, and you lend a hand. She 's a good two miles away if she 's a fathom, and she has a bit the best of the wind, but no matter."

"There go up her colours," exclaimed Paul, and as we watched her we could just discern the pennant float from the masthead and the Jack from the gaff.

She was cruising down Channel on the look-out, of course, for crossing craft.

I starboarded the helm a bit to give *The Tam-o'-Shanter* a fairer breeze. We were both now taking the same course.

No sooner had I done this than a thick puff of smoke shot out, followed by the loud report of her forward port gun.

" Are yer heaving to, Cap'n ? " shouted Paul.

" Not for a bit, sonny," I replied.

" She has some big bronze aboard, judging from the size of that sound."

" She 'll want 'em before she 's finished with us, Paul."

" Here comes another from the starboard."

" There 's a shot in this," I said, as I noticed the heavier report, and I had no sooner spoken than the ball dropped with a great splash a mile astern.

With the coming light the wind was freshening, and a ploughman could have seen that we were not only holding our own, but were fast gaining on her.

" I 'll give her a surprise, men. Get out the balloon jib, and make ready to stow the jib and fores'l. See how sharp you can be."

" We shall lose half a mile, Cap'n," broke in Paul.

" Doesn't matter if we lose a mile."

Bang ! went her second gun on the port bow, and this showed me that she carried swivel guns, and was therefore a modern boat. The next question was to what extent was she fitted with stuns'ls for running before the breeze. I had to watch her closely to see what she was setting.

" Ready there ? "

" Aye, aye, Cap'n ! "

" Let her go ! " and down came the fore'sl and jib, and in less than five minutes I had my great balloon jib set, and as the breeze filled it out you could feel the boat straining every timber to get her head.

" Blest if she isn't as far off as ever ! " said Paul with a smirk, cramming a great chunk of twist in his mouth, and tucking up his sleeves for the next job.

" I shall take her right across now, and if that doesn't show them what we can do nothing will."

So saying, I ported the helm about forty points of the compass, and ran her on the wind, nearly athwart their bows.

I was really traversing two sides of a triangle to their one.

When they saw this they fired again, but the powder must have been a trifle damp, unless the elevation was bad, for the ball struck the water a mile and a half short of the mark.

They turned out of their course a few points more than I did to cut me off, but from this time onward the race was a very tame affair, and shortly afterwards fizzled out.

"Strike me lucky!" ventured Paul a couple of hours later, "I can't spy 'em at all now."

But some little while afterwards we heard her gun again, and concluded that she had fallen in with another freighter, upon whom she no doubt vented her earlier disappointment.

Nothing could have been easier for *The Tam-o'-Shanter* than the way in which she shook off her pursuer, and I felt very serene about it.

We dropped anchor in Falmouth Bay just before midnight, and then our hard work commenced. By the light of the moon we stowed the balloon jib, and got ready to set our fores'l and jib. We restored *The Tam-o'-Shanter* name-plate, because the Customs were sure to be on the look-out for me, and, after all, that was the registered name of my boat. We wrapped the tubs, with four-pound sinkers attached, up

in a long canvas stocking, then passing a chain through the concealed iron pipe which ran down by the stern-post, we fastened the stocking to the other end of it, and turned in for an hour or two's snooze.

Paul, who required less sleep than any man I had met, was on the look-out before daylight.

"I can't see nothing moving in the harbour yet, Cap'n," he said when I joined him.

"The tide seems to be making fast, and we 'll hoist sail in another half an hour."

"Aye, aye, Cap'n! You 'd best get a bit of breakfast meantime. You 'll be wanted directly," he concluded with a grin.

The rattle of blocks and scampering of feet overhead shortly after brought me on deck again. She was now pointing seaward head on to the tide, her tubs, as we calculated, floating about on a level with her keel; so with only the two working for'ard sails set, and the mainsail loosed from the boom, with the tack well triced up to show we were in no hurry, we put about for the harbour.

"The Government boat, Cap'n, is lying just inside the Point," said Paul, but I had seen it

long before he spoke, and saw them run up the Jack on spotting us.

" It 's a sure thing," I said, " they 'll want to board us. I shall put her about in the wind at the first sign. You and a couple of hands stand by."

" Aye, aye ! "

Paul knew my object. In turning her round I wanted to give our parcel time to swing clear before anyone with an inquisitive turn of mind came aboard.

We were level with the Castle, when four men put off from their ship in a rowing-boat. There was no doubt of their intention, which was either to be run down or to head us off.

I went forward in case they had anything to say.

" We 're coming aboard—put her about," the officer rapped out.

" About ! " I shouted.

Paul starboarded the helm, and a couple of men stood by.

" Down fors'l and jib ! "

They had now two hundred yards to row against tide and breeze, and this would give the stocking time to clear.

"Shall I drop anchor, sir?" I asked as they came alongside.

"I 'll tell you when I come aboard," he replied brusquely.

I helped the Commander with another man on deck.

"Is your name Hawken?" he asked without further parley.

"Quite right."

"I 'm going to search you for smuggled goods."

"Go ahead," I said.

They thereupon set to work.

Ten minutes went by, and as the Commander came up from the fore cabin I reminded him that I was still drifting.

"That 's your look-out. I don't know how long we shall be here; so you had better drop anchor."

"Cast anchor!" I ordered. "We 're here for the day."

Two hands now prepared to do this, when the officer, having met his man, who had already searched the after-cabin, exclaimed—

"Hold hard! We shan't trouble you."

"You are satisfied, sir?" I put to him.

"I am satisfied you have nothing on board," he replied guardedly. "Where are you bound for?"

"Up the river a little way," I said casually, paying him back in his own coin.

"I've heard of *The Tam-o'-Shanter*," he went on in a pleasanter tone.

"But nothing against her, sir?" to which he was careful not to reply.

A minute later they both got into their boat and rowed away, and we hoisted sail, put about again, and proceeded on our journey.

"I know what the report will be to-night, Cap'n."

"What, Paul?"

"Something like this: 'Boarded *The Tammy Shanter* off Pendennis Point. Never found no contraband. Reckon it was sunk in the Bay overnight. The King said he was bound a little way up the Fal,'" and Paul spat his old quid overboard and ran through his pockets for a fresh one.

We made Pill before the tide turned, and dropped anchor just outside the port.

Under cover of darkness, some hours later,

the tubs were all safely landed, and reached the sluicers the same night without mishap.

I drew the money, and also took another order for a fortnight hence, and when I reached my home next day all the local man could do was to send a report to Ginger that the King had returned; but as he must have known from the seamen that I had been up the Fal the day before, this news couldn't have surprised him.

CHAPTER XIX

"SPERRIT HOSSES"

By the means of my new device I saw large possibilities in bringing across small cargoes, and while waiting for the Squire I smuggled in fifty tubs weekly for the next two or three months. I had an order to deliver a cargo in St. Just Pool, the bulk of which was no doubt intended for St. Mawes. As this was my third journey into the Lion's Mouth I was not searched, although I hung about to give the Revenue men the chance of doing so.

"That 's a mortal strange thing, Cap'n," remarked Paul when it became evident that they were going to let us through, drawing a splinter from his foot; "blest if I can make it out."

"It may be that they are playing a waiting game," I replied, "and will be ready for us to-night, as usual, at Pill."

"That 'll be a tarnation disappointment for them."

Taking my bearings from the wind-mill, I let

go anchor well up the creek, beyond the church. During the night the contraband was fetched by boat, and taken away on horseback, as it landed, by a dozen riders. The whole operation took less than an hour.

At daybreak we saw a couple of mounted King's men come down on the sands to the spot where the goods came ashore, then gallop away inland hell for leather.

"They 're tracking 'em, or I 'm a Dutchman!" exclaimed Paul, who was always on the alert after sun-up.

"Yes," I said, "they 've picked up the scent all right, and the soft ground couldn't be better for them."

"They 've tracked 'em down to the beach, and are now tracking 'em home."

"Well, there 's one thing peculiar about it," I said, "and that is I thought from what I could see and hear last night that all the horses went the other way."

"Now I come to think of it, too, I 'm of the same opinion, Cap'n. It 's a mystery, that 's what it is."

"Get the ship's boat out, Paul, and we 'll go ashore and clear it up."

Having landed, and pulled the boat out of the reach of the tide, we followed the direction taken by the two men.

"We 'em both wrong, Cap'n," cried Paul, examining the ground, and before we had gone ten paces, "here 's the horses' tracks, sure 'nough, and the Government men are after 'em."

The trail was as plain as a lighthouse, and took us on to the main road and the St. Just Lane village a mile away.

Here was a bit of a commotion. The villagers were all out and agog. The doors of the little smithy had been broken in, and the blacksmith, a hardy, full-whiskered chap, was being commiserated with all around.

A dozen tongues were ready to tell us of the wrong which had been done him, but I went to headquarters.

"I weren't up," he said, in reply to my inquiry. "I gits up at six, and they was 'ere at half-past five. My ole 'ooman hears 'em first. She digs me in the ribs and zays, 'There 's pretty ructions outside. Whatever 's matter? See what it is.' I heard a lot of rapping at the door and hollerin', and when I pokes me head

out of the winder I seen a couple of mounted officers, in full kit, outside. 'Come down and open the door,' they shout. I zays, 'Orl right, I haven't got me clothes on yet.' They zays, 'Come down at once, never mind yer clothes. We 've a-tracked some smugglers into the forge. If yer don't open it at once we shall break in the door.' I says, 'You 'm in a devil of a hurry all at once. I 'm a-going to dress myself fust.' Well, dang me! while I was a-dressin' I heard a terrible thumpin' and a bangin' going on, and, poking me head out of the winder again, I saw they 'd got hold of one of them there bars of iron, and was ramming at the shoeing forge door like a couple of madmen. 'Aw, do 'ee get up, my dear!' said the ole 'ooman. 'I am skeered out of my life. The dirty varmints 'll have the forge and the house down if you don't!' Well, when I got down they 'd a-knocked the door in. 'This is a nice thing,' I zays, 'breaking in here in the night, destroying a man's property!' 'Where be the hosses we 've a-tracked here?' I zays, 'This ain't a stable, and I ain't a hoss dealer.' 'Stop yer talk,' they zays, 'we know they 're here somewhere. We 've a-tracked 'em in, and there 's no tracks of 'em going out.

You 've got 'em 'ere right enough.' I zays, 'Have I? I didn't know it. How many have I got?' 'Ten or a dozen,' they zays. 'But, my dear man,' I zays, 'my forge 'll only hold zix, as you can see! You 'm talking zilly!' 'Well, if the hosses beant here,' they zays, 'the tubs is.' Then they went through the back door, which isn't big enough for a hoss to go through, and, dang me! if they didn't trample down my tetties in the garden to look for the tubs. I zays, 'How many tubs have I got here?' but they took no notice. Then I zays, 'I wish with all me heart you 'd find 'em. My dear life! I 'll tap wan quick, for I 'm fair dying for a wet.' I follered 'em about, but they never said a word. When they finished, I zays, 'Be I asleep or be you?' and arter that I zaw 'em look at one another sheepish. 'Look here,' they zays, 'come out in the road. Zee these hosses' tracks. We follered 'em right up from the sea. They 're not more 'n a few hours old, and every hoss has come into yer forge. How is it they 've got away without showin' any marks?' I zays, 'It 's very strange. I can't dispute what you say.' They must be sperrit hosses. Now, what about my door?' I zays.

'That 'll take a carpenter the best part of a day to put right. Are yer goin' to pay, or do yer want me to have the Law on yer?' 'We don't want no threats,' they zays. 'We 'll give yer a crown to square it.' And ere 's the money they gave me," saying which he produced the coin with a glint of triumph.

Having relieved himself of his experiences, he pushed two or three horny fingers through a mass of fair curly hair, and eyeing us curiously, he inquired—

"Who may you be, if I can arsk so bold a question?"

"We came in by boat last night," I replied, "and saw the King's men take up the tracks this morning, and we were a bit curious."

He gave an expressive wink.

"Aw, I zee," he said. "If you come inside I 'll tell 'ee zome more."

We followed him into the forge, and as soon as we were out of earshot of the sympathisers, he asked in a whisper—

"Did you bring in the tubs?"

I nodded.

"I thought you did." Then, chuckling heartily, "Well, we 've dished 'em this time

proper, and it 'll be a long while before such lubbers as they find out how it was done."

"You set 'em the wrong way on?" I suggested knowingly, hardly able to restrain a laugh.

"That 's right. They brought 'em in here after dark, one at a time, without shoes, and I shod 'em fore-end back, so in follering the tracks they was going the wrong way."

"Peter Tonkin! Peter Tonkin!" came a shrill voice from the adjoining cottage.

"There 's my old 'ooman a-hollering. Hullo, Maria!" he shouted back.

"Yer breakfast is ready."

"And I 'm ready for it," and with that he shook hands and left us.

We put out with the next tide, and heard no more of the incident. I had no doubt, however, but that the run with all its details was duly booked to me.

The three months having expired within which Squire Botallack expected to place his order, I spent the next few days awaiting tidings from him. I felt that the time couldn't be riper than the moment for a truce. I hadn't mentioned the proposal to a soul. It was soon

enough to do that after Ginger had committed himself. I thought that of late I had detected a slight falling-off in the vigilance displayed by the shore Service. During the last dozen runs, apart from one chase and two searches by the Revenue men, I had met with no opposition. It is true that I didn't give them many chances, but from the news which I gathered from the skippers on the other side, their experiences agreed with mine, and it really looked as if Ginger and his men were getting into a more reasonable frame of mind, and that after all the Squire would not find it so difficult to get them to shut one eye by the use of a little palm oil as I had at first imagined.

When tidings of the latter did arrive, it took the form of another invitation to his country seat.

CHAPTER XX

THE SNARE AND THE SAND

"Now, Cap'n, I 've fixed it all up," said the Squire. "I have seen the chief again, and he is waiting to hear the time and place of landing."

"Has he promised to let the goods through, Squire?" I asked.

"Well, he understood the position, and promised it would be all right. I found him more amenable this time and, indeed, anxious to oblige."

"Did my name crop up at all?"

"No, Cap'n, he said he hoped I should have a reliable man to undertake the run—a man who understood the business."

"It seems strange; but as he knows you and what the stuff is for, I should hardly think he intends to play the traitor."

"He knows better than to try any tricks with me, Cap'n, you can rely upon that. Now what shall I tell him?"

"Tell him that the goods will be landed at Veryan Bay on the night ebb next Wednesday. I'll get the tubs ashore, and you had better arrange as to the carting."

"I can do that, Cap'n."

"As there will be a good moon, I would suggest that you get some sea-weed collected during the day for covering."

On the journey home my mind was not easy. Suppose it were a trap, and Ginger was quite capable of setting one, or a dozen, to catch me. Then the other side of the picture struck me. Would it be worth his while to come in conflict with the Squire, who as a Member of Parliament was of some importance and power. At the end of my meditations I came to the conclusion that could I but follow my own instinct in the matter I would, in spite of the arrangement, carry out the run somewhere else and dish the lot. So long as the Squire got the goods, what did it matter?

I took Paul into my confidence when a couple of days later we set sail, as usual, with the trawl ready combed and slung for working, but with three days' provisions on board, which had been shipped as fish-baskets of firewood.

Paul thought for a few minutes, then opened out.

"It 's like this 'ere Cap'n, if Ginger acts straight he may plant his men in different places 'specially to keep 'em out o' the way, and if you try a landing somewheres else, you may run right into 'em. What 'll the Squire say then ? "

"That seems sound reasoning, mate. So you think we ought to stick to the Squire ? "

"If we stick to the Squire and there 's trouble he will get us out of it as likely as not. If we don't stick to him he won't feel under no compunctions on that tack."

"I think you are right."

"A good job, Cap'n, you have fixed the run at low water."

"Yes, I don't care for that bay when the tide is in."

"Nor don't I, the sand there shifts by every tide, and you can never tell when you are in two fathoms of water or only 'alf a one. I know every inch of that bay, and when the sands is quick."

The late summer sun now peeped out and lit up *The Tam-o'-Shanter* with a shimmer, so

Paul, who was never an idler, stripped off his jumper and got busy.

Nothing unusual happened on the voyage out. M. Ratier had got the silk handkerchiefs, and he also supplied the Squire's tubs, and after waiting twenty-four hours we weighed anchor for home. I had no fear of Revenue boats—there were none working our district who could catch mine, unless by an accident or a fluke.

"I make it out, Cap'n, that we 've got a matter of seven hours in hand," said Paul, as on the succeeding day we came within four miles of land.

"We 'll put down the trawl for a spell, mate, and you keep a look-out for any suspicious craft approaching.

"Aye, aye!"

"We don't want to be caught napping, and have to cut away the trawl to save ourselves."

"Aye, aye! You go and have a doss down, Cap'n."

At sunset, and after stowing the trawl, we spied a strange-looking cutter-rigged boat waiting about as we were, and she puzzled us.

"Those sails were never made for her," declared Paul.

"She 's disguised herself for some reason or other," I said.

"That she has, for she 's neither a fishin'-boat nor a smuggler."

"She means mischief, Paul, in spite of the fact that she 's making away."

"She don't 'pear to be armed, Cap'n, for I can't see any loopholes."

"She may have blocked them up, which is easily done."

"Well, with that rig she can't do us much harm, I 'll wager a gallon of the best beer in Mevagissey."

Although she disappeared from sight when dusk came on, I was not happy. Why did she want to come up slowly to have a look at us and then as slowly go away again? For a big boat with her little sails she stood no more chance of out-pointing or out-sailing us than she did of catching a sea-pie. Still, time would show.

The parish lantern, at the full, now lifted herself up away in the east, and with the slight breeze still holding, it seemed as if we couldn't have selected a better night to get the Squire's goods ashore. It was low water at eleven

o'clock, and we allowed ourselves an hour to get in. We let go anchor in the bay in about a fathom and a half, and got the boat out to row the tubs across the hundred yards which separated us from land.

There was not a solitary human being in sight, and it seemed so strange that I had to ask myself the question whether or not a mistake had been made as to our rendezvous. Any doubt, however, was soon dispelled by the sight of four or five shadowy forms who appeared from nowhere, almost like spectres, and came down the beach towards us.

I was rather pleased at this than not, as it showed me that the Squire was alive to possibilities and dangers, and had given instructions accordingly.

"You row ashore, Paul," I said, "and see that things are in order, and find out if they are ready to stow the stuff."

"It 's all clear, Cap'n," said Paul a few minutes later on his return. "Squire 's got five carriers and three carts waiting in the lane, and he 's coming down himself directly to see you."

We lowered the tubs into the boat, and Paul

took in ten at a time, two for each carrier. Everything worked well. The shoremen could get them away just as fast as we could send them in. The sea was as calm as a fat pig asleep, and not a wisp of cloud or mist obscured the brightness of the moon.

As the Squire wanted to see me I went aboard with the last load.

Approaching the shore, I noticed quite a group of men waiting for us. It struck me that the carriers had returned quicker than on the other occasions, and that probably the Squire, and perhaps a friend, might be amongst them.

Just before the boat beached herself three men left the others and rushed into the water towards us.

"Don't let them land!" a voice that I knew only too well shouted in commanding tones, and thereupon the other two laid hold of the bow of the boat and held up her way.

"We are Customs men, Hawken!" exclaimed the voice, which I had already recognised belonged to Ginger. "Consider yourself and your man under arrest."

Something glinted in his hand, and I could see that he had drawn his pistol.

So the Squire, after all his assurances and the reliance he had placed on Ginger's word, was betrayed. His social position and influence had not availed him anything.

Such of the tub-carriers as were spectators had heard enough, for they took to their heels like one man, and at the same time two more plain-clothes Customs men appeared on the scene.

"I 'm carrying out a little job for Squire Botallack," I said, in case any mistake had been made.

"We know all about that," said Ginger curtly, "and I give you warning that if you show any resistance you 'll get a ball through your hide."

This was a challenge which I had to consider quickly. The question arose, Should I fight, with the probability, if not certainty, of being overwhelmed, or should I capitulate, and leave it to the Squire to see me through ?

I judged that he might find it easier to secure a hearing for me if I went quietly. The men standing in a foot of water were in grim earnest, and there were now four of them with their hands on the boat.

"Pitch out the cargo to make room for yourselves—it will wash ashore—and three of you take the boat out in deep water."

Ginger spoke with some determination, and while his orders were carried out he covered me with his pistol in case I offered any opposition.

The three men, keenly alert for the slightest sign of obstruction, then proceeded to get into the boat.

Paul, who had the sculls up to now, had said or done nothing, and as he rose in response to a tap on the shoulder to give up his seat he bounded overboard with the agility of a greyhound, and in half a dozen springs he was out of the sea on to the sand careering for his life along the water's edge.

Ginger promptly let off his pistol at him, but missed, and a man in the boat let go his, but this was also wide of the mark, and they had to rely upon Paul being caught by the only remaining King's man on the beach who took up the chase. Paul at a great pace was making straight along the water's edge to the end of the bay where there was no possible escape for him, and his pursuer, knowing this, kept an

inside course. Having proceeded in this way a matter of two or three hundred yards, Paul swerved to the left towards the shore, when it seemed that by taking this roundabout way he would be cut off for a certainty and captured.

He had a reason, however, for this. He was leading his pursuer over the moistened sand, which according to the quantity of water at times formed a quicksand eight feet deep to the bed-rock. Then it was not land and it was not water, the sand being held in suspense in a shifting medium. If water predominated the man must go under. If sand, he could just get through. Evidently one of my custodians was alive to this, as he raised his voice in a lusty shout, "Mind the quicksand, Bill!" The murmur of the making tide, however, must have drowned the sound, for on he went with redoubled energy now that the advantage appeared to be with him.

Bill was the Mevagissey man imported from another county, and if he had made himself acquainted with the local coast-line, as he should have done, such a warning ought not to have been necessary.

Half a minute later he staggered and slackened

in his pace. He threw up his arms as if to balance himself better, then he stopped, and still waving his arms about his head turned, or partly turned, as if to retrace his steps. But his speed had carried him on too far, for he was stuck fast, and appeared to get shorter and shorter. He turned his head now right towards us, we could just discern his face in the moonlight, and there floated down above the lap of the sea on the shingle a piercing yell, "Help! Help!"

"Good God!" exclaimed Ginger, who started off to his assistance, then swinging round, he shouted back, "Watch Hawken!" By the time he had covered half the distance only the man's head and shoulders were visible. There were more cries of "Help!" which grew fainter and fainter, and in a few seconds all that was left was a round, dark object on the sand, which seemed to move slightly from side to side before disappearing altogether.

Out of feelings of humanity, not unmixed, perhaps, with curiosity, I commenced to rise from my seat as one would who imagined his eyes had served him a trick.

I heard an oath, and saw a scull descending

on my head. I tried to ward it off, and remembered nothing more until I found myself some time later with my sore head bandaged, my clothes blood-sodden, and my wrists handcuffed together, on the suspiciously-rigged cutter which we had noticed at sundown.

At daybreak the Revenue flag was flying at her masthead, and some time during the next night we put into Poole Harbour.

CHAPTER XXI

COMMITTED FOR TRIAL

THE following morning, still handcuffed, I was placed on the London coach. To make doubly sure against my escape I had an officer on either side each armed with a loaded musket. This tedious journey occupied three days, and during the whole of that period, sleeping or waking, these men never left me.

Having reached the great city, I was straightway taken to the Old Bailey and charged with smuggling on the high seas, and remanded for a week. On coming up again there was added the further offence of causing the death of the local King's man, and on this charge I was committed for trial.

I realised then that I was up against a serious thing, with probably the death penalty at the end of it. I had no friends on my side now, the Service took care of that. They meant cooking my goose this time.

For the next few weeks, as a prisoner on

remand, I was entitled to have what I liked to eat and drink on paying for it, and fortunately I had some ten pounds about me when arrested. There were fifty or sixty of us charged with various offences, and all day we huddled together in a big messroom waiting to be tried at the same sessions. The bulk of them spent their time discussing their chances. One, a loquacious little man with long, black dundreary whiskers and of general Semitic appearance, and who seemed more at home with his surroundings than any of them, undertook the business of laying the odds against acquittals. He had three stock questions: "What are you in for? How did you get caught? Have you been in before?" and on the answers he would quote his odds.

"Now yours is what I call a pee-culiar case, young man," he used to say to me. "Let 's see if I can't hincrease my hodds a trifle. Everybody in the Barbican knows Joe Ford. They knows I 've got the money and pays, and likewise they knows that I can't get more than three months for Sunday trading."

"I don't think there 's anything more to tell you," I replied.

"I gin'rally come in here for a short spell every eighteen months, and of all the hundreds of cases I 've run up against yours is the most hinteresting. I 've been thinking it over a good bit. Blest if I don't hincrease my hoffer, because I likes your case. It 's fresh. I 'll lay you a thousand crowns to one you don't get off. There you are!"

And he tucked his thumbs into the arm-holes of his vest, stuck out a leg, and tilted his head.

"It 's not a thing I care to bet over, Mr. Ford," I said.

"Well, look here, I don't want to make money outer you. Most men would be proud to have your case. Look at the samples around us. Take this gentleman," and he pointed to a cross-eyed individual standing by listening to the conversation, "charged with firing his warehouse for the hinsurance money. I calls that a dirty case, you get the fire but without the glory. There 's another gent pinched for selling dogs' meat sausages for pork. A low-down case, but we 've done satisfactory business together. Now I shall only make this hoffer once. For a crown

down I 'll give you five hundred if you escape with your neck, and my money 's good."

He slapped his leg with the flat of his hand and struck another attitude. I thanked him and turned away. So my chances of life appeared to be meagre indeed!

The day before the trial I accepted the offer of a lawyer to defend me. I was waited upon by a hatchet-faced elderly man who exuded a pungent atmosphere of peppermint.

"It looks to me like Botany Bay at least," he said casually, after making a note of all I had to say.

"What! transportation?" I queried, aghast.

"Yes, but you would be satisfied, I suppose, with a lifer?" he went on in the same business-like tones.

"A lifer—do you mean ——?"

"That 's it, penal servitude for life. Tell me, why are you so sure that this red-whiskered Preventive man has been for years trying to catch you?"

"Because he and his men call me 'The King—The King of the Smugglers,' and the authorities have my record."

The lawyer pursed his lips and scowled for a short interval.

"Do you know anything against this chief to whose trickery you have been a victim?"

"Not any more than I have told you."

"Well," he said, rising, "I will do what I can for you, but I am afraid it's a hanging job." With this cold comfort he left me.

As soon as I was placed in the dock there were three knocks on the door of the court, and all rose. The four rows of lawyers faced the entering judge in his black and scarlet and bowed. Behind him came the city magnates in their furred robes and golden chains, and the judge's chaplain in gown, cassock, and bands. These took their seats in stately fashion on the bench. A big nosegay was thereupon handed up to the judge, who smilingly buried his face in it, and then immediately filled up his nostrils with snuff.

After this we went through much the same procedure as took place in the trial of poor Jack Cregan.

Although the light was very dim, I was not long in picking out Ginger in the crowd, for his mottled face was wreathed in smiles. He had before him a large portfolio of note-books, and from the importance of the position which

he occupied there was no doubt his rôle was that of chief witness against me.

The case opened with a full detailed account of my career, little being omitted, and the statement culminated with the recital of the last run, the escape of Paul, who had not been caught, and the violent death and disappearance of the local Customs officer.

"The man in the dock, gentlemen," concluded the advocate for the Crown, "was known throughout the Service as 'The King of the Smugglers.' He was looked up to and admired by all other smugglers, and it was their constant endeavour to emulate his exploits in all departments of this fraudulent and lawless traffic. The prisoner stopped at nothing, and owing to his example he has become a grave menace to the State. The money which ought to have gone into His Majesty's pocket this pinch-beck King has feloniously put into his own, and to secure it he did not hesitate to sacrifice any life which came in his way. The Crown are lucky to have at last laid him by the heels, and unless I have seriously mistaken the sympathies of an English jury, and have been living in a

fool's paradise, we shall be troubled with him no more."

Ginger's evidence naturally recast my former doings in the most lurid colours, and all through he appeared as proud as a cock about to crow. My hatchet-faced lawyer tried in vain to shake his testimony.

"Why did you promise to let the goods through?" he asked.

"Because I wanted to catch him."

"Why did you not let him land?"

"Because then he would have come up for trial at Bodmin."

"What objection was there to that?"

"A Cornish jury would have let him off," replied Ginger with a smirk.

"Why do you suppose that?" asked the judge. "That seems a great slur on a Cornish jury."

"Because, m'lord, it would be difficult to find twelve men there without having one or more of his customers amongst them."

"His trade was that extensive?"

"Yes, m'lord."

"That rather bears out the Crown's case as to what a menace to the State the prisoner

was," commented the judge, eyeing the jury critically.

My man put up the best defence he could, but while he was speaking the judge had a nap and the jury yawned. Towards the end of his address he took the line that if I was found guilty a sentence of transportation would meet the case. They wanted men like me at Botany Bay, where there was plenty of rough, hard work to be done.

When my man had finished the clerk of the court rapped out, " Silence ! " and this woke up the judge. He was a little, fat man, shaped like a tub. He had lost his spectacles, and in rolling about in his chair looking for them it seemed as if he would roll off. Having put them on, he snuffed up and passed his gold box down the Bench. It must have been good snuff, for they all helped themselves liberally. From what I had seen of the trade over in France, and the way in which the article was adulterated here, I should question if the judge's had ever seen a Customs House.

He had a sharp, squeaky voice which was difficult to hear, but he didn't subject it to any long trial.

"An ordinary smuggling case, gentlemen," he jerked out, "accompanied by the usual sacrifice of a young and useful life, and aggravated, as is customary, by both violence and trickery. Give me your verdict."

The foreman of the jury whispered to the man behind him, glanced down each panel, then rose.

"Guilty, my lord!" he said, and resumed his seat.

All eyes were now turned on the judge. He took another pinch of snuff, and nodded to an official who seemed suddenly to appear at his side.

This individual produced a little square black handkerchief and placed it lightly on the judge's wig, the chaplain at the same time leaving his seat and taking up a position behind.

An uncanny silence pervaded the scene

"Wesley Hawken!"—the judge rolled from side to side as he spoke, and his voice, which was like a saw accidentally striking a hidden nail, seemed to fall strangely on the hushed court, and fill it with rasping echoes—"Wesley Hawken, the sentence of the court is that you be taken to a place of execution and be there

hanged by the neck until you are dead, and that your body be buried within the precincts of the jail which you have last occupied, and may the Lord have mercy on your soul." To which the chaplain, with head bent and fingers uplifted, feebly responded, "Amen."

CHAPTER XXII

THE CONDEMNED CELL

I WAS like a man hit on the head with a marline-spike.

I felt a tap on the shoulder, and swinging around, I was motioned by a warder down the dark steps from the dock into the cells below.

Reaching the bottom, a gleam of daylight penetrating through a heavily-barred window and throwing sombre shadows was just sufficient to show up the passage and that there were no steps to be negotiated. As further darkness overtook us another gleam struggled through a second window, and so we walked in procession, one warder in front and one behind me, our footfalls on the slated floor resounding with strange echoes. Now as it struck my nostrils I recalled the same damp, musty air that I had lived in for the last four weeks. I could scarcely breathe again. Oh, what I would give for just one mouthful of the pure, health-giving breezes in which I had spent my life. Bah! I checked myself. What was the

good to think of such things now? What was air to life? I was to die—die by the rope, and I wanted to live—yes, anywhere.

"Number 39, Capital!" shouted the foremost warder to the chief, who was waiting with an inferior in an underground vestibule at the end of the passages.

The chief opened a big book and wrote something in it with a scratchy quill, then peppered the entry with some fine sand to absorb the ink, and shut the book up.

"This way!" rapped out the younger man, and selecting a key from a big bunch at his waist, beckoned me to follow.

More passages and turnings, and a minute later I found myself in a still darker and smaller cell than I had been using, the iron-braced door of which I gauged from the sound was secured from the outside by a heavy lock and two sliding bolts.

"Number 39, Capital!" was ringing in my ear.

Glancing round, I noticed by the aid of a shaft of light which entered through a tiny window opposite the door and eight feet above the ground that the furniture was scantier than

ever. There was a little wooden shelf, which was built into and projected from the wall, and from the fact that there was a wooden basin and wooden spoon on it, I judged it was intended to serve as a table. Standing on the floor below it was a three-legged stool, and by the side of it a great thick iron chain, and in the corner was a good-sized parcel wrapped up in what appeared to be a blanket. Any thought of escape was immediately dispelled by a second look at the window, this showed by the setting and the cutting away of the inside to allow the light to come in at all that the outside wall was not less than three feet thick.

Here was a nice kettle of fish, I thought. Surely if ever a King had been dethroned I had been. I was mad at realising my own helplessness. A full week's journey by coach from my home and friends, and—O God! condemned to death!

The day's proceedings had shown me that every man's hand was against me, as no doubt was intended by the authorities should be the case. My old lifelong enemy had triumphed beyond all expectation, and I was to die—aye, die ignominiously—a felon! What a

finish! The situation would have been bad enough amongst my own kith and kin, but amongst strangers and in a strange land, where a man was treated like a wild beast, it was intolerable.

I hadn't got far with these meditations before a clanking of approaching boot-nails interrupted me. The sound of keys, locks, and bolts rattled out on the stillness of my surroundings, and a warder who was fresh to me entered. He was of medium height and massive in structure, with a jovial red face.

"Hullo, matey!" he said light-heartedly. "Have yer got the blues or the measles?"

"I 've got a bit of both," I replied as brightly as I could.

"Well, cheer up!" he went on, and then commenced to sing in an undertone a lively tune, the only part of which I remember was that it finished with the words, "Cheer up! Cheer up!"

"They tell me that they have been trying to catch you for years," he went on, glancing at me with a certain amount of pride. "Where do you come from?"

"Cornwall," I said.

"Cornwall! down among the Wesleyans! What is it against yer, then?"

"I have been doing a bit of smuggling."

"Smuggling! Ah! they 're down on those coves here."

"So it seems."

"Yes, matey. I 've never known a smuggler reprieved yet. You best make up your mind for Kingdom Come."

"When is it?"

"Day after to-morrer. You 'll leave here in one of His Majesty's chariots soon after eight ante-meridian for the salubrious district of Tyburn."

I didn't like this man's jaunty talk, but it seemed more mannerism than anything else, and I gave him the credit of meaning well.

"There 's only two other Capitals sent down to-day, so you won't feel lonely."

"What do you mean by Capitals?" I asked.

"Why, Capital Punishments, of course, it 's jest our trade name for them. Now, matey," he continued, "you 've got five meals more by the rules of our beneficent Government, and it 's my dooty to see that you can have what you fancy and as much as you like. They think it

wrong to send a man away into a new country hungry, and I agree with 'em."

"I don't feel much like eating," I said.

"Up to now you 've paid for it yourself," he went on, disregarding my remark and reclining against the cell wall. "Now things is changed, and you are the honoured guest of the State. Let me tempt you. There 's chops and steaks, very luscious, hashed venison and walnuts, fit for any arkangel, roast turkey, which I strongly recommend, for I had it myself, or a cut off the freshest joint in hand."

"Thank you," I said, "but hot or cold, tender or tough, it 's all the same to me now."

Had it been any other occasion I might have taken an interest in his bill of fare, but now all food was abhorrent.

"And, matey, coming to the question of liquid refreshment, Capitals are entitled to two bowls of ale a day, and if so be as you 're a teetotaller, I take the liberty of drinking your health with it."

"You mentioned the question of a reprieve just now," I said, changing the subject. "Can you tell me how I can get to work to obtain one?"

"Matey, it 's no good trying. His Elegancy the Home Sec. is dead against smugglers and all their wicked ways, you would stand a better chance of breaking out; and that reminds me that it is my solemn dooty to put those chains on you," and he pointed to the yard length of heavy chain lying on the floor.

"You surely can spare me that torture," I pleaded.

"I must have 'em on by the time the chief comes round at seven o' the clock, and it 's after six now. I 'll stretch a point in your case and take 'em off again after he has done his rounds," saying which he reached out for the chains.

"Here you are," he said, opening the spring anklets. "One for each leg, just slip 'em on, matey, and snap them to. That 's right. Now nobody can complain. Lor' bless yer! I have known gentlemen, ah! and desperate gentlemen, too, who got so accustomed to them that they couldn't sleep without them—said they kept their feet warm."

My feet were now shackled together by a thick, rusty, iron chain that could not have weighed less than twenty pounds. This seemed

to me to fill up my cup with remorse and agony. A King in chains! I had experienced a few shocks in my time, but nothing like this. Manslaughter and sudden death in their worst forms had never been quite so appalling as this man's cold philosophy.

"Now I'll fetch yer yer grub," said my visitor. "Did you say you was a teetotaller, matey?"

"Yes, to-night."

"Ah! I thought you said so, but no matter."

Half an hour later he returned with a dish full of food and a bowl of ale, but I couldn't touch it, the smell of it nearly made me ill.

"Well, that's according to custom," he ventured casually as he removed the stuff; "but it won't be wasted, there's a dozen poor beggar women outside waiting for the leavings of first-night Capitals as is off their pecker."

Half an hour later the chief, accompanied by my warder and another, came round and in silence shone a lantern on me, and shortly afterwards, in accordance with his promise, my friend unlocked and removed the chains for the night.

"You have a good rest, matey," he said

considerately, " that mattress in the corner will unroll in its place. I thought I should never wake the cove what slept on it last night, but he 's embarked on a long nap now. Good night! I drank yer health all right."

Sleep was impossible, the night was one long torture to me. The groans and repinings of some of the other Capitals in adjacent cells filled the long hours with a hideous horror that would have driven many a man stark staring mad—Capitals booked for the morning. Even those who were callous enough to want to sleep spent the night loudly cursing those who wouldn't let them. The noise and hullabaloo was indescribable. There was one humorist among the party who could not be subdued. With certain doom awaiting him, he never lost his spirit or courage. He put in his time cleverly imitating the calls and sounds of all the animals and birds, I should think, that he had ever heard.

I was glad when the first streak of day peeped through the barred window, and I believe (if such a terrible admission is permissible) that I was more glad when that raving and blasphemous gang of cut-throats had cleared off, never to return.

The relief warder who brought in my breakfast of ham and eggs was not of a talkative disposition.

My appetite had returned, and although I was not allowed a knife, the meal for a breakfast was one of the best I had ever eaten. An hour or so later there was another jangling of keys and harsh rattle of locks and bolts, and again the heavy cell door opened with a squeak.

" His Excellency the Right Honourable Tom Clinch, to see you, my lord," announced my old cheery warder, who had returned to duty, in mock ceremony, and an impish old hunchback man entered, with a well-assumed smile of greeting. He stood about four foot six, and was attired in a much worn suit of clothes that were built for a person at least a foot taller. His face and hands were very dirty, and his little sloe-coloured eyes were blood-shot.

The door closed with a grating jar, and we were alone.

" Good mornin' ! Good mornin' ! " he said in a high-pitched voice, still wearing his smile.

" Good morning, sir," I replied.

" I thought I 'd jest run the rule over you," he went on apologetically. " You don't mind ?"

I didn't understand the request, so made no response.

"You see, they cut me very close, only four shillings and sixpence a time, so there 's no room to throw nuffink away," saying which he produced a two-foot rule, and looked me up and down.

"You 'll want six foot, if I 'm anything of a judge. Just a minute," and with that, starting from the floor, he took my height with the measure. "Two, four, six," he repeated, ticking off the measurements as he mounted upwards. "Yes, and not a bit to spare."

Then he surveyed me with a look of disappointment.

"There 's nuffink in this, you 're so broad; and as they 'll pull your neck out another hinch, you 'll want six foot one when you 're cold."

"Is this for my ——"

"Corfin, yes," he nodded quickly. "I 've got the contract for 'em all. It 's a big thing. It 's calculated they hang 'em now for two hundred offences."

A cold, clammy feeling came over me, and I didn't want to talk, but my visitor went on reminiscently.

"I had a hinteresting customer last week. Jack Turpin, grandson or somethink like that of the great Dick, a highway gentleman and a very nice chap. I fitted him too from stock. I 'll jest squat down a minute, I 'm tired," and he sat on my little three-legged stool, folded his monkeyish arms, and smiled me his thanks. "Yes, he gave me a crown, said he would have given me two, but the hother one he was keeping for the hoperator. You never met him, I suppose?"

"No," I said, "I never heard of him."

"Never heard of Jack? Why, you must be a stranger in these 'ere parts."

I nodded.

"When I first seen you I thought you was on the road, jest the build, but yer can't be if you never heard of Jack. What is it, housebreakin'?"

"No, smuggling."

"Ah! it struck me there was a bit of the seafaring smell about you. Smugglin', eh? If I had my time over again I should be a smuggler. I love smugglers. Two of my uncles was Romney Marsh wool smugglers. They was a couple of breezy lads as ever you saw. Both

gibbeted. Look here, would you like hiron handles or rope ? "

" I don't think it matters, Tom," I said jauntily.

" You can have which you like. I 've only contracted for rope, but if you like to do the thing a little better than the hordinary, as a gentleman of your standin' should, I 'll give you hiron with pleasure."

I said—

" I 'll leave it to you."

" I haven't had a smuggler for twelve months, and the last one was no good ; but I can see that you 're a proper smuggler—one of the right sort, and I love 'em."

" It 's very nice of you to say that, Tom," and I couldn't help smiling.

" Not at all. I wish you had better company to-morrer, more befittin'. There 's only three, and the other two that I 've jest measured ain't worthy to travel with you."

I fumbled in my pockets, and realised that I had about a guinea and a half, but not knowing how much of this I should require, and clearly the hangman would want a remembrance, I gave Tom a crown.

"I hardly like to take it, sir, because I feel that I can do so little for you with it, but you shall have the finest bit of helm in the workshop, and you shall have hiron, and so 's that nobody else shall have your box, I 'll burn your number on it."

Then taking my hand and dropping his voice almost to a whisper, he said—

"Good-bye! Good-bye!"

"Good-bye, Tom, and good luck to you," I said in return.

After shouting "Bill!" through the grating of the door, the latter was opened, and Tom joined his friend the warder on the other side.

I spent the rest of the day writing a long letter to my mother. I didn't tell her all. I wanted to spare her feelings as much as possible. I said the trial had gone against me, and if she didn't see me home again in a few months, she might assume that I had gone away for good. Then I gave her directions as to what to do with my property and money in the bank (which by this time was a tidy bit), and I felt considerably relieved at the thought that she would be well provided for as long as she lived. I desired to be remembered to all old friends whom I

named, and when I had finished the first real spasm of sadness, I think, stole over me—a deadly, dull feeling of stifling misery. So long as I could fight, whether the elements or my life-long enemies, I was never down-hearted, but now with nothing but unreachable windows and heavily-barred and iron-braced doors to fight against I was right out of my depth, and felt I must sink. As it was driven home to me that I had to die, I found myself cursing the authorities for keeping me waiting so long. I wanted to be off—off to the scaffold.

"This is your last supper, matey," said my effervescent warder, "and I 've brought you a very excellent portion of roast capon."

As he placed the meal on the table I noticed he cast a longing glance at the ale.

"You polish off that bowl, Bill," I said, handing it to him. "It will be wasted on me."

"Thank you, matey." Then, adopting a more confessional tone, "Do you know, without these here extry pulls I couldn't stand this job. It 's my firm belief as a teetotaller would go right slap off his mortal onion here in a month, always providin' he weren't off it when he came in."

I said—

"I shall go off mine if I stay here much longer."

"Well, good health, matey!" and he raised the jug to his lips with a fine sweep.

"Good health isn't much use to me now, Bill," I said, as he wiped his hairy mouth with the sleeve of his tunic.

"Ah! I meant good health after to-morrer, and before you go you will be able to drink mine."

"How so?"

"At St. Giles's, they always stop at St. Giles's to have a final binder, and very good stuff they has up there."

"Who are the other two going with me, Bill?"

"Ah! you 've got a grim and curious case there, matey. One of 'em has hanged more men than anybody living, and his thriving business, as is usual, was his downfall."

"Was he a hangman, then?"

"Yes, of the name of Rudd. He officiated at Tyburn for fifteen years. A quicker man with a rope was never seen, and very much liked and respected by all who met him."

"How did he disgrace himself?"

"Well, toward the end of last sessions he had a extry heavy day, strung up a score or more, and he was that nice to his customers

that they made a collection for him. He never had so much money before. Afterwards he took a drop or two more than was good for him, and going home pocketed a pound of candles from a shop without paying for them. He 's coming up to-morrer to be polished off by his worthy successor. As the poor chap has lost all his friends, there 's very little chance of a reprieve, which shows that his profession has its drawbacks like all of them."

"What 's the other case?"

"The other case isn't much, although I oughtn't to say anything aginst him, as he 's strict teetotal. Now, matey, you can ride with which one of them you like."

"I don't fancy the companionship of an ex-hangman, Bill, especially on my last journey."

"Very well, it 's jest a matter of choice. I 'll fix it up so that you drive with the other one, and he shall go in state by having a chariot to himself."

We then went through the same performance with the chains as on the previous evening, and I was left to spend my last night on earth in comfortless solitude, and with only my thoughts, now dulled and aching, to commune with.

CHAPTER XXIII

COFFINS FOR THREE

SHORTLY after eight o'clock next morning I was handcuffed and taken into the prison yard, where two or three officials were in attendance.

"You must wait here for the procession to assemble, matey," said my warder friend in an undertone. "I've finished with you now. Good luck!"

"Good luck, Bill!" I responded, and a couple of minutes later I was joined by my two companions, also handcuffed, and we were then all shackled together.

The great yard doors opened from time to time to admit of "the procession." There came first two rough skeleton-built single-horsed carts. One contained two plain elm coffins, and the other, one, the ends of which were cocked well in the air behind.

These were followed by six horse grenadiers with swords at the slope, and two mounted constables. Our coupling shackles were then

removed, and the smaller man and I (still handcuffed) were ordered into one cart, and the third man, whom I took to be the ex-hangman, got into the other. The wait now was a long one, and I had plenty of opportunity of taking in my surroundings. Behind me was my box with coarse iron handles and the number 39 burnt on the lid as Tom Clinch had promised. In the ordinary way this grim spectacle would have been nerve-racking enough to any man, but I had passed beyond the stage of sentiment by this time. Desperation closes one's senses to all the finer feelings, and I was momentarily sinking lower and lower to the level of the brute beast. When everyone seemed to be getting restive and tired a bibulous-looking and blotchy-faced individual in an open carriage and pair was admitted with much show and pomp.

"Who is this chap?" I asked in a whisper to my companion.

"The Sheriff's representative, probably a clerk in the Under-Sheriff's office," he replied with difficulty, for he was trembling with emotion.

The Chief Constable now handed the last

comer a document, which he affected to read, then folded up and stuffed into his pocket.

"All right?" he piped in a squeaky voice.

"All right, sir."

The gates swung open, and preceded by the soldiers, with the carriage and pair and the constables bringing up the rear, we were off.

A clump of half-clothed street urchins outside were lying in wait for us.

"There 's only three to-day, bah!" shouted one, and this was the signal for them to open upon us a fusillade of rotten apples.

I tried two or three times to open up conversation with my companion, who seemed quite a respectable little man, but he appeared to be too overcome to take any notice of me.

Finally I asked—

"What 's your trouble, friend?"

"Fraudulent bankruptcy," he replied with a quiver. "I made myself bankrupt, then they arrested me and found I had twenty pounds in my pocket. That 's all. I 'm expecting a reprieve."

"That 's a hard case," was all I could say.

"I suppose you are a knight of the road?" he ventured slowly and almost inaudibly.

"No, my friend, a journeyman of the sea. Smuggling has landed me into this, but I have no regrets."

Here I ducked to avoid a bad egg, which broke with a hollow thud and a sickening odour on my friend's coffin. He took no notice, and relapsed again into stony silence.

I saw more people that day than I had ever seen before. The streets teemed with them. Those who came to see the procession, judging from their remarks, seemed disappointed that there were only three of us—three Capitals. Many in consequence, I noticed, turned away in disgust.

The ex-hangman, who occupied the second cart alone, was often recognised, and came in for many gibes and much ironical banter from the crowd, but his soul was unruffled through it all. He entered into the jest with a liveliness which was amazing, and on the whole gave back as good as he received.

We travelled at a slow walk, and nearly an hour later drew up at St. Giles's Hospital Tavern, in accordance with immemorial custom, for the final bowl of ale.

"Now then for your last drink!" exclaimed

the uniformed driver. "We haven't got a lot of time to spare, and if you 're as dry as I am you 'll want it all. There 's the door," and he pointed to a side entrance, in which stood a hefty white-aproned barman smiling pleasantly upon the scene.

I prepared to dismount, but my companion sat still.

"Now then, monkey-face, hurry up!" rapped out the official, frowning at him.

"But why should I?" he pleaded weakly. "I don't drink, and don't want to."

"By the great jumping Jehoshaphat! what? Here 's a pretty thing!" he shouted, turning to the grenadiers and constables, who had now made a wall around us. "We 've actually struck a teetotal. Well, this beats cock-fightin'. Why, Rudd, it 's a pity you 're not performin' to-day, to make your record complete."

"Aye, aye, I wish you 'd let me. I don't number a teetotal in my catalogue. Never saw one afore," was Rudd's comment, which he delivered with a huge grin.

"What 's the matter?" now squeaked the Sheriff's agent, whose wants had already been

attended to while still in his carriage, and without waiting for a reply he buried his pimpled face in the froth that rose from his jug.

"Won't come in, sir, 'cause he 's teetotal."

"Send him on then. Don't keep him waiting, we don't want him here," commanded the agent.

A bowl was thoughtfully fetched for the driver, so that he should not be a sufferer, and the last I saw of my fellow-traveller was his being rattled away over the cobbles at a smart trot to the gallows, with the two coffins swaying into one another behind.

Once inside we pretty well filled the little bar, and the landlord was kept busy drawing ale for the thirsty crowd.

"Why, Mr. Rudd," he said, after he had supplied them all round, catching sight of an old and valued customer, "what a surprise to see you like this. I can't say as what I didn't hear of yer little set-back, but I never expected it would come to this."

"Your ale that night was too strong for me, Joe," replied Rudd, looking very sickly, and drowning his mortification in a substantial pull at his bowl.

"I seen yer wife and kids outside awhile ago. I s'pose they was waiting for yer," continued the landlord in a confidential tone.

"Yes, I seen 'em when I come in. I sent 'em home. Here fill up!" and in awkwardly setting down his empty mug he realised that in consequence of his handcuffs he had to use both hands.

A uniformed messenger in big jack-boots and long clanking spurs now entered. He had a black leather strap over his shoulders to which was attached a satchel. Pulling this around in front of him, he opened it and withdrew a blue paper

"A reprieve for Jones," he said, unfolding and glancing at the document.

"Jones? Jones?" repeated the Chief Constable, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand. "Too late—he 's on the swing by now."

"You might just catch him," put in another officer casually, looking at his watch.

"Another drink, please, for the Sheriff," called one of that gentleman's well-powdered coachmen, presenting an empty jug to the host, and quietude settled on the gathering until the order was complied with.

"Too late? Why too late?" asked the messenger.

"He 's teetotal and refused to come in, so he was sent on sharp."

"I needn't trouble any further then, but, by gad! I could do with a cooler."

"Another bowl, boss," ordered the Chief peremptorily, "and see that His Majesty's courier has a full one."

"It 's a great pity to waste that there reprieve," suggested Rudd, earnestly fixing his beady eyes on the last speaker, "being as it is too late for the cove as what it was intended for. Look here! I 'll toss this here gent whether he shall have it or me."

"That won't do, Rudd, you 're too well known to be seen about again, and there 's too many waiting to see the last of yer to-day," and the firm tone of the Chief Constable clearly showed Rudd that it was no use pursuing the subject.

"Hear, hear!" interjected another officer. "It might be different with this other man, seeing that he is a stranger, and appears to be a decent chap," and the two last speakers eyed me critically.

"Yes, I agree," again put in the Chief, "it would be another matter in his case."

I said—

"Gentlemen, I thank you, but I could never consent to take another man's reprieve while there is any doubt that that man may still be alive."

A silence ensued for a second or two. Those who had nothing to say raised their bowls and cast respectful glances at me.

"Then I 'll hurry on," said the courier, and fastening up his satchel, twisted it round under his arm, took a hasty pull at his ale, and clanked out.

As he left another man of spruce appearance entered. The Chief approached him, and they held a whispered conversation for a short time. Then he came within the ring of grenadiers around us and called for more ale. While they were all thus busily engaged in their cups he put a piece of paper in my hand and said quietly—

"Read that."

Although the light was bad, I read—

"Follow the bearer of this note. There will be no opposition."

At first I couldn't understand it, so I raised the note nearer my eyes and read it again.

"Follow the bearer," but the bearer was standing still and talking to one and all in a jovial way. Then what could I do with handcuffs on me? Handcuffs! As I looked for them they had suddenly gone. I knew from past experience that they had a knack of putting them on very quickly, in fact before one could realise it, but it was new to me that they could be removed in the same magical way.

My unknown friend was now withdrawing towards the back door of the bar, and like a dazed man I lurched towards him. I passed behind Rudd, who by this time was very nearly drunk, and seemed quite oblivious to his surroundings. My guide touched the door, and it opened. As we passed through and it closed, the landlord, who was waiting outside, bolted it and left us.

We passed through a short passage into a back yard filled with old jars and bottles and broken crockery, and on a covered rain-water butt were two beaver hats.

"See if one of these will fit you, then leave your cap behind," said my friend pleasantly.

Still like a man in a dream I tried them, and one fitted. Leading out of the yard was a door which took us into a side street. We followed two or three side streets and then came out again into the main thoroughfare that I had traversed half an hour ago accompanied by my coffin.

The sense of liberty was so overwhelming that I was not able to speak; it absorbed the whole of my mind. In a trice I had from brute beast become man again. A free man! Once more I heard the swish of the tide against the jagged cliffs of my home county, the harbours and festoons of drying fishing-nets came back with a wild, passionate joy of remembrance, and in the centre of my imaginary picture was my mother!

My rescuer said nothing until we had walked the best part of a mile, then glancing at my rambling gait he said—

"I suppose you haven't had much walking exercise lately?"

"Not for a month. I can hardly feel my legs. Have we far to go?"

"No, not far—to Portman Square."

We took a turn to the left and came to some

rows of stately houses arranged in the form of a square. Mounting half a dozen entrance steps, a door, in response to his knock, was thrown open by a butler, and we were ushered into a big library.

"Well, Captain!" exclaimed a voice from a writing table, as the owner rose and stretched out his hand.

I took the proffered hand mechanically, and our eyes met. It was the Squire! I tried to find a word, but my tongue seemed tied.

"I shouldn't have known you, Captain, you are so altered," he went on with a smile, at the same time motioning me to a chair.

I suppose I was still too dumbfounded to do anything, so turning to my companion, he said—

"You can leave us for a few minutes." Then again to me, "Come, won't you take a seat?"

After the door had closed I reached out my hand once more, and we shook again in silence, yet understood one another completely.

"So it is you, Squire, you that I have to thank for this."

"That 's all right," he said casually. "

tried to get a reprieve, but the King is so opposed to smuggling in any form that I was only offered facilities for—well—for an escape."

"An escape!" I repeated to myself. It seemed queer, yet of course I realised that after all it was only an escape.

"I have been working at it steadily since the verdict," he continued. "I couldn't have managed it at all without the highest influences. I'm a member of the new Government, and this made my task easier."

"I felt that it couldn't have been so simple as it looked," I said, "and the whole thing mystified me."

"Everything had to be managed in advance, and any hitch in the proceedings would have meant disaster to the scheme. Before you started from the Old Bailey every one of your custodians knew what was coming, and yet I couldn't send you a word of hope. I had to trust to your doing nothing to spoil your chances, but inwardly I had no fear on that score."

"It all comes up plain to me now, Squire."

"My secretary has been on the watch almost since daybreak, and has rendered me great assistance, for naturally, as a member of the

Government, I couldn't take as active a part in the business as I should have liked."

"Of course not, Squire," I replied, astounded at his revelations. Then after a pause I said, "I 'm glad you got in all right."

"Yes, although the Government had the tubs, I was elected without their aid by an overwhelming majority."

"They didn't prosecute you, Squire?"

"No, they knew better than that. Besides, they were out to catch you, not me."

"Am I supposed to be dead, or to have escaped from custody?"

The Squire thought a minute.

"Both, Captain. Officially you are dead, and I have had to go so far as to arrange for your funeral; but actually you are alive, and I 'm sorry to say that I have undertaken that you shall leave the country."

"I 'll go anywhere, Squire," I replied.

"Well, my private secretary, who fetched you to-day, will show you down to the docks, and if you take my advice you will sign on a ship without delay."

"That 'll suit me."

"It will be, of course, reported by Ginger

down in your home when he reaches there in a day or two that you are dead, but you can rely upon my letting your mother know privately that you are—well, just the reverse."

"If you can do that, Squire, I shall leave the happiest man alive."

"After a bit," went on the Squire thoughtfully, "when things have blown over, and our enemy Ginger perhaps is out of the way, I am hoping that possibly there may not be any obstacles to your return to your home, but don't think of that yet."

"Have you any scheme in your mind, Squire, for getting Ginger out of the way?"

"Not yet, indeed up to now I've not had time to think about it; but I gather that there may be ways and means of getting him promoted and transferred to another district."

"Well, whatever happens," I said, "I shall never be able to thank you enough for what you have done."

"Don't mention that, Captain. Now, you will require an outfit, and I suppose you will want some money, so what about ten pounds, will that be enough?"

"More than enough, and you must treat it as a loan."

The Squire handed me over ten pounds already tied up in a bag, rose, and pulled a bell-rope at his back, and the private secretary entered.

"I want you to give Captain Hawken a good meal, then get an outfit for him and take him down to the docks, where he will sign on a suitable ship."

"Very well, sir."

"In his own interests, I think, no time should be wasted. Now, Captain, you know where to find me at any time in London, and I hope, later on, in Cornwall. I wish you luck!"

An hour later, after an excellent repast and accompanied by the private secretary as my guide, I was out in the streets once more.

My mind was too full of thoughts to either say or notice anything. The big city had no charms or claims for me. I seemed to have gone through a life-time in three hours—glorious hours—and I felt that I wanted to be alone to enjoy the remembrance of it.

"There go your coffins!" remarked my companion, pointing his stick in the direction of his gaze, and there rumbling down the main street with the traffic was one of the carts returning with the three coffins on it, one lying

on top of the other two. We were about the only people who appeared to take any interest in the spectacle.

"Mine is the bottom one this side," I replied, "with the iron handles."

"I suppose that is the only empty one."

"There 's a doubt about that," and I told him about the reprieve for the little man Jones.

We walked down the footway, keeping pace with and abreast of the load.

"Can you recognise his coffin?" he asked.

"Yes, that small one on the top is his, and as they would never go to the trouble of lifting a full one on top of an empty one, I should put it down that the top one was empty too."

"I am glad to hear that the reprieve was not too late after all," he said, as he agreed with my conclusions.

The point, however, to this day was never cleared up, but it certainly looked as if poor Rudd had had a cart in state to himself both ways.

Shortly after this we mounted a conveyance for the docks. Here I bought a rig-out, and shipped before the mast the same night on a barque just out of the yards for Table Bay.

CHAPTER XXIV

MY CHOICE

THE fresh air and sea breezes soon restored me to my old self, but not before my shipmates had noticed, I fear, that I was a strange customer. I had to put up with a lot of chaff at the start.

"Strike me lucky! one would think from the way in which you struts about the deck, young man, that you was the owner of this 'ere craft," or, "Any orders to-day, Cap'n?" or, "They say you were a preacher afore you came aboard, old solemn-face!" and suchlike were fair samples of the remarks addressed to me, and no doubt I found it anything but easy to sever myself entirely from my old habits and associations with the great weight on my mind which recent experiences had left there. Besides which, the sudden drop from captain and owner of my own boat to that of an ordinary seaman was a large one, and not easy to negotiate in a hurry.

The wind blew, however, from a different quarter before very long, and the chaffers had to toe the line to me.

When crossing the Equator some six weeks later the Captain sent for me. He was a roaring great chap, with a head as big and as bald as a brass capstan. The crew used to say that first day out he broke every spy-glass he had over the head of some luckless sailor who happened to be a little slow in getting his sea legs.

"We 've lost our bo'sun," he said, "from the Black Jack, and after he goes overboard at sundown I want you to take his place till we can get another."

"Aye, aye, Cap'n!" I replied.

"Do you know yer job?"

"Aye, aye, Cap'n! know it from main top-mast head to keel."

"Very well, I 'll tell the crew after the service. Meanwhile, see if you can find a winding-sheet and a weight for the stiff 'un."

I kept my promotion for the remainder of the voyage.

Ten months elapsed before we reached Tilbury again, and by this time I was consumed

with a yearning to see my mother and the folks at home.

I reasoned it out that as I was dead and buried they couldn't hang and bury me again, and the man in the official world who said I was not dead would never be believed. My friends, I knew, would say that I was either dead or alive as best suited the circumstances and my safety. So as soon as I was paid off I decided to have a peep at the old faces, come what might.

I was determined from the start, however, to do nothing to injure or jeopardise Squire Botallack, and I made up my mind that rather than run any risk I would not even disclose myself. I wanted to see, and not to be seen.

I first had all the hair shaved off my face, leaving only a mariner's belt of it that extended around my chin from ear to ear like some great chin strap to a helmet. Then I bought a razor, and mounted the coach for Plymouth. I soon realised from their uniform that two of my fellow-travellers were King's men, recruits bound for the same destination. It ill became a sailor home from the sea, as I presented myself

to them, to be taciturn or morose, so as I had to play my part I thought I had best get out from them all the information relating to "the trade" that I could.

"It 's good to see the King's uniform again, me hearties," I began breezily, "after spending three years with the blacks, who thought themselves well dressed if they had on a pampus grass apron."

"Furren parts don't attract me, Jack." He made sure my name was Jack. "What say you, Joe?"

"This old country up to now has been good enough for me," responded Joe, his companion.

"What 's your lay, mates," I continued, "soldiering or navy work?"

"Customs."

"Ah! Preventive men to stop this smuggling business."

"That 's right, we shall stop it in time."

"I don't know much about it, but some years ago, down near my home, there was a red-whiskered chap that used to get on the track of some of them, and he 'd play wreck with them."

"Did he have a wall eye?"

"I believe he did," I replied a little doubtfully.

"That 's the man, Jack. He 's our chief. We 've got to report ourselves to him as soon as we arrive."

"He seemed to me," I continued, "to be a smart chap."

"He is that. He 's Chief Supervisor now for all Cornwall—just promoted. He 'll only have the smartest men under him."

"Ah!" I said, smiling, "I see, me hearties, that 's his reason for having you."

"Draw it mild, Jack," said one pleasantly, and we all three laughed in unison.

"Is yours indoor or outdoor work?" I asked, after a pause.

"Coast patrol, mostly."

"Where 's your chief's headquarters?"

"We don't know. He 's all over the place. We shan't know till we get down where we 've got to report ourselves."

This was useful news to me. Ginger had been promoted, but not removed as hinted by the Squire. He, therefore, was still in the way, and his present position gave him an additional power which made him a more dangerous

enemy than ever. Although suffering under acute disappointment, I nevertheless kept up my breeziness to the end of the journey, which lasted six days.

Leaving my fellow-travellers at Plymouth, I crossed the Tamar by ferry, and rather than tramp the forty miles to Mevagissey with a heavy bundle of clobber, I decided to put in at Cawsand to see what chance there was of getting a lift by boat, either the whole or part of the way. I had no fear of being recognised except by one man, and that was Ginger, who, I recalled, had seen me similarly shorn some years previously at Porthleven. So long, therefore, as I was careful to speak to no one whom I knew I felt that I should be quite safe.

Cawsand, to my knowledge, was doing as big a contraband trade with the Continent as any port on the south coast, and in addition their boats were competing with the coach for sea-faring passengers as far as Falmouth.

I hardly expected, however, to be successful, for as soon as I got near the coast-line I could see that the wind was rising, and the sea was

getting up from a stiff sou'-easter. I had had experience of these sudden equinoctial blows, and knew that few boats would put out unless they could help it until the weather had cleared. There was only one thing to be done, and that was to face the tramp with the wind behind me, and rely upon getting a lift of some sort on the main road as soon as I could strike it again. Turning my face westward, I soon struck Whitsand Bay, and here, looking seawards, noticed a small boat trying to make Rame Head in the teeth of the wind, which was now blowing like a blast out of a pipe, and increasing with the rising tide. I stopped and watched her. She had up a little lug sail and a mizen, and she was rolling and tossing in the trough of the sea. If ever a boat had been caught she was, for she stood a better chance of making the Lizard sixty miles away than she did Rame Head. Every minute blew her nearer the shore, and made her position worse. When she realised this she put around her helm, and I could see she intended beaching herself on the bay if she could get there. I ran down the beach in the direction of the spot where she would be likely to strike, and then noticed she

was a Customs boat with three officers aboard. They had no doubt put out to creep for a sunken cargo, and delayed getting back until it was too late. The wind striking the making tide created a chop which threatened to swamp her any moment, and the helmsman, who was evidently uncertain of his bearings and the reefs, couldn't decide where to run ashore. They knew they were in for a ducking wherever they struck, if not something worse, and he found himself in two minds. He ported the helm again, and steered her down the bay. As he did so the big waves struck her on the port beam, drenching them. I ran down the bay to keep up as well as I could with the distressful crew. The sea had got hold of her again, and she was bobbing up and down like a cork. An extra big-sized gust and cross sea struck her just as she was on the crest of a wave. They let go the sail, always too close hauled, and as it flagged out with a jerk she instantly turned turtle.

I dropped my bundle, kicked off my shoes, flung off my coat, and as I made a dash into the sea I saw two heads appear for a second on a wave around the wreck, and I thought

in a lull in the squall that I heard their agonised voices yelling for help.

I fought my way through the breakers, but long before I reached the boat, which was floating keel upwards, supported only by the imprisoned air in the hull, the struggling forms had disappeared. Weighed down by their heavy uniforms and jack-boots, they had to give up the struggle in such a sea. Surely there was nothing to be done—I could render no help, but then again I might be of assistance.

I reached the upturned boat, but not a sign of life around me. I shouted as best I could, and in response I heard a sound that almost made my heart stop beating. It was the smothered voice of a man cooped up under her keel, and shut into a tomb. A wave pitched me almost on top of the keel, and I shouted again—

"Hang on! I'm here!"

The reply was three knocks as of a man's fist on the hold. Getting on the leaward side I laid hold of a fender, and raising my voice, hollered—

"She's drifting ashore fast. Hang on for another five minutes."

I now perceived that as soon as her mast touched the bottom she would be swamped, and whether the prisoner could swim or not he stood a better chance without his boots. So again I shouted, "Get your boots off." I assumed he was hanging on to one of the seats. That he heard me I had no doubt, for in reply I detected a feeble beat on the keel. Owing to the curl of the bay I found she was not drifting in as quickly as I had hoped, and the question arose as to whether he would have air enough inside to last out.

My strength was gradually getting less. I felt I should soon have to strike out for shore to save myself. I hollered a time or two more to cheer him up, but had no reply. And then what I expected happened. The mast struck the ground as she dipped between the waves, and the next one turned her over and sank her, leaving the unlucky Customs man to the mercy of the seas.

Then at a glance I knew that we had met before. In that second and through the flying scud and mist I recognised the man who had beset me all my life—who had killed my father before me.

Stange fate that now on my return I should be confronted a few yards away with the only man in the world I wished to avoid ; and yet a stranger thing, the man who thought my body long since burnt to ashes by the cruel quicklime poured into a felon's grave. For a moment I felt anchored to the spot. Then the thought rushed through my brain : Had I been brought there by an unknown guide ? Was I after all destined to see the end of my enemy ?

I saw that he was insensible, if not already dead, and if ever a man was torn by conflicting emotions powerful enough to unhinge his mind it was I. A second later my better instincts prevailed. I made a grab at him, and after great efforts to keep him from sinking, with both the wind and the sea favourable, I got him ashore.

I dragged him up out of the run of the swell, and propped up his head so that the wind blowing on his face might revive him.

All this time a voice was dinning in my ear, " Do you want him to revive ? " I shuddered. " Remember what the villain has done for you," went on the voice.

I had swallowed a lot of salt water, and,

in addition, was shivering from cold, and crouching there with one knee on the sand and the other supporting his head, in my emotion I was driving my finger-nails into the palms of my hands.

"Why don't you throw the dog back into the sea?"

I couldn't get away from that voice, it seemed to penetrate my soul.

"Go on—back with him!"

Was it my father's voice?

I realised that I was losing my self-control, and was becoming momentarily more helpless against the tempter.

"Don't be a fool! You have your chance now. He's dead enough, only throw him back in case."

I must have lost my senses, for I remember rising and gripping him by the collar with both hands, but I couldn't lift him. He appeared to be as heavy as lead, and I reckoned it out that it was due to the terrible thought flashing through my brain that I had lost my strength which woke me and gave me back my reason. I combed his dripping red hair with my fingers from his forehead, and he

opened his mouth with a gasp. So he was not dead! His insensibility was obviously the outcome of want of air when he was imprisoned in his tomb. I decided to see him a little further recovered, then I would flee. He first drew up his knees, then extended his arms slightly and groaned. After a while he turned his head, and put his hand to his chest like a man struggling for breath, so I gently withdrew my supporting knee, which now he didn't require, got up and bolted.

I ran west, and remembered that my bundle, coat, and boots lay some two hundred yards back in the opposite direction, so as he hadn't moved I retraced my steps. He glanced around and saw me, then rose without much effort, and came towards me holding out his hands, the gale behind him helping him along. The action, coming from him, seemed so strange that I was spell-bound. My original intention of disappearing vanished, and I did a thing which half an hour ago would have occurred to me as being impossible. I approached him with hand extended—as man to man. He looked at me, and then took my hand in both of his, but his feelings had bound his tongue.

"Without your encouraging voice I could never have held out, and even now I don't know how I got ashore," he said thickly after a lengthy pause.

I turned my gaze downwards, so that he shouldn't get a full view of my face.

He glanced seawards as if looking for his men and the boat, then trembled as the full force of the remembrance struck him.

"My officers?"

His voice choked him, and in the whistle of the wind which flapped our sodden clothes I could hardly hear him.

"Gone, poor chaps!" and I disguised my tone as much as possible.

"The boat?"

"There!" I pointed to the spot where the top of her mast was appearing now and then between the seas. "If she becomes sand-logged you ought to be able to salve her at low water."

He threw his eyes at me with a jerk. I had betrayed myself. I turned, and made as to move away.

"Good God!" he exclaimed. "You are not real? No! No! It's I, I who have lost my senses!"

He hissed out the last word in a falsetto, staggered, and then from sheer weakness sank down on the beach. He never took his eyes from me. I returned, and lent him a hand.

I said—

"Calm yourself, old man." I was prepared to brazen it out now. "I 'm real enough. I have come back to life to save yours."

He laid hold of my hand, nor would he let it go for some minutes.

Half an hour later I helped him back to his quarters at Cawsand. He plied me with questions, and in answering them I was careful to give no one away.

When I left him he said—

"Hawken, you go back home, your friends will be relieved to see you, and I 'll—I 'll look you up when to-day's tragedy is disposed off."

He called, maybe, a week afterwards. He came in a pair-horsed dog-cart, well-covered in gilt and trappings. He wore four medals on his breast and a crape band on his arm. His wall eye had a more pleasing expression than I had ever seen before.

I met him in our little creeper-clad porch.

I didn't care for him to come in the house, as a visit under such circumstances from a Government man so soon after my return might upset my mother.

He wouldn't sit on the porch seat, but leant up against the end timber support.

"I want to make a bargain with you, King," he said easily, almost lightly.

"What is it, Ginger?"

"Will you come into the Service and work on our side if—if I get you a free pardon?"

He dropped his voice so low that I could scarcely hear him.

"What, and turn traitor! No, not while my name is Wesley Hawken!"

I must have adopted such firm tones that he cast his eyes on the ground like a man who had met a rebuff.

"Will you give up smuggling for a free pardon?"

There was a new frankness in his glance, and he spoke pleadingly.

I looked away for a moment, and tried to weigh up the situation and all that the question involved for me. The love of smuggling for itself, the pure joy of the adventure, was in my

very blood. Now I was asked to give up for ever the delight of eluding the Preventive man, of pitting my wits against his. But, then, never again should I be called upon to pay the awful penalty at Tyburn, never again should I be cut off from the home which now drew me like a magnet. In a flash I had made my choice.

I turned to Ginger and put my hand on his shoulder.

"Yes, I will!" I replied, and from that day to this I have kept my word.

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